

Johann Wolfgang von
GOETHE
FROM MY LIFE
POETRY AND TRUTH

ὁ μὴ δαρεῖς ἄνθρωπος οὐ παιδεύεται

Preface

The present work, perhaps more than some other one, may need a foreword, and a friend's letter shall serve in that capacity, for this letter caused me to undertake a task of this always precarious kind.

Dear Friend,

We now have in hand all twelve volumes of your poetic works,² and in perusing them we find much that is familiar, much that is not; actually, the collection brings back to mind much we had forgotten. One cannot refrain from viewing the twelve volumes as a whole, since they stand before us in identical format, and from them one would like to sketch a portrait of the author and his talents. Now it is undeniable that a dozen small volumes seem meager in view of the bustle of activity with which you began your writing career and the long time that has elapsed since then. Nor can one help noticing that the individual works are mostly the products of special occasions and betray both subject matter that is externally determined and stages of cultural development that are internally determined. No less dominant in them are certain moral and esthetic maxims and convictions to which you held temporarily. Yet in general these productions lack connection with each other. Often it is hard to believe they were written by the same author.

Meanwhile your friends have not abandoned their investigations, and, on the strength of their close acquaintance with your way of living and thinking, they are trying to guess many a riddle and solve many a problem. As a matter of fact, they are so confident of their old friendship and long-time relationship that they find even the existing difficulties rather stimulating. Still we would welcome some occasional assistance, which, in view of our friendly intentions, you will surely not refuse.

The first thing we ask for, then, is that you put the poetic works in your new edition (which are now arranged according to certain

inner relationships) into chronological order, and make us privy, in some coherent fashion, not only to those conditions of life and mind that provided the substance for them, but also to the examples that influenced you and the theoretical principles you followed. Although you will be going to this trouble for the sake of a rather narrow circle, perhaps something will come of it to delight and profit a wider one. Even when he is very old, an author should not sacrifice the advantage he has of discoursing, though it be at a distance, with those who cherish him. And although it is not given to every artist of advanced years to come forth again unexpectedly with productions of great resonance, still it should be a very entertaining and reinvigorating occupation for him, just at the time of life when his perceptions have grown more perfect and his self-knowledge more distinct, to treat those old productions again as subject matter and put the final touch to them, so as to add further to the cultural development of those who earlier developed themselves along with and through him.

This demand, which was expressed so amicably, immediately awoke my desire to fulfill it. For although in youth we passionately go our own way and, in order not to be deterred, impatiently refuse the requests of others, in more mature years we heartily welcome anyone's interest, insofar as it stimulates us and lovingly directs us to a new activity. Therefore I at once undertook the provisional task of designating and arranging by year all the greater and lesser works in my twelve volumes. I tried to reconstruct in my mind the times and circumstances which surrounded their creation. But the task soon grew more difficult because the gaps between facts already made known had to be filled in with detailed information and explication. For in the first place all my early efforts were missing, as well as many things begun but not finished; and many a piece, although finished, had completely lost its original appearance through being entirely reworked later and cast into a different form. Besides, I had to consider my endeavors in the sciences and the other arts and what I, either individually or together with friends, had sometimes experimented with privately, sometimes made known publicly, in these seemingly alien fields.

I planned to include all of this by degrees for the satisfaction of my well-wishers, but my exertions and reflections kept leading me farther: While I was trying to respond to their very well-considered demands and endeavoring to outline seriatim the inner impulses and outward influences, as well as the theoretical and practical steps I took, lo! I found myself transported out of my narrow private life into the wide world. The forms emerged of a hundred significant persons who had affected me rather closely or distantly. Even the general course of the

political world, whose immense currents exerted just as much influence on me as on the rest of my contemporaries, had to be carefully taken into account. For the chief goal of biography appears to be this: to present the subject in his temporal circumstances, to show how these both hinder and help him, how he uses them to construct his view of man and the world, and how he, providing he is an artist, poet, or author, mirrors them again for others. But something nearly impossible is required for this, namely, that the individual know himself and his century—himself, as a constant entity in the midst of all the circumstances, and the century, as a force pulling him along willy-nilly, directing and developing him to such an extent that one may well say he would have been quite a different person if born ten years before or after, as far as his own cultural development and his effect on others are concerned.

In this fashion, and from such observations and experiments, from such memories and reflections, the present portrayal came into being. One can best enjoy and profit from it, and most fairly judge it, if one keeps in mind how it originated. In the course of the narration, various opportunities will be found for whatever might still remain to be said, particularly with regard to the half-poetical, half-historical treatment of events.

In a life history that proceeds on many levels, as does the one I have ventured to undertake here, to make certain events coherent and readable one is sometimes compelled to separate what in time was intertwined, and to draw together what in time was separated but can only be grasped as a sequence—thus putting together the whole in parts that one may thoughtfully examine, judge, and, to some extent, make one's own.

I place this observation at the opening of the present part as partial justification of my procedure, and I ask my readers to bear in mind that the story continued here does not connect precisely with the close of the previous book but has the aim of gradually gathering up the main threads again, setting forth persons, as well as moods and activities, in a meaningful sequence.

PART ONE

Book One

It was on the 28th of August, 1749, at the stroke of twelve noon, that I came into the world in Frankfurt on the Main. The constellation was auspicious: the Sun was in Virgo and at its culmination for the day. Jupiter and Venus looked amicably upon it, and Mercury was not hostile. Saturn and Mars maintained indifference. Only the Moon, just then becoming full, was in a position to exert adverse force, because its planetary hour had begun. It did, indeed, resist my birth, which did not take place until this hour had passed.

These good aspects, which astrologers in later years taught me to value very highly, were probably responsible for my survival, for the midwife was so unskilled that I was brought into the world as good as dead, and only with great difficulty could I be made to open my eyes and see the light. It was a harrowing experience for my family, but at least the townspeople had some benefit from it, inasmuch as my grandfather, Johann Wolfgang Textor, who was the chief magistrate, was moved by this to appoint an official birth-assistant and to introduce, or reintroduce, the instruction of midwives. That was probably a fortunate thing for many a child thereafter.

When someone tries to remember his earliest childhood experiences, he may easily confuse his own real recollections with what he has heard from others. Without trying to investigate the matter exactly, then, which would be futile anyway, I do know that we lived in an old house, or rather, *two* old houses joined into one. A circular staircase led to disconnected rooms, and the floor levels were so uneven that steps had to be put between them. We children, that is, my younger sister and I, liked the spacious ground-floor entrance hall best, for next to the door there was a large wooden latticework frame that jutted out into the street and the open air. Many houses were equipped with "birdcages" of this kind, which were given the name "Geräms." The women would sit in them to sew or knit, or the cook to sort her salad greens. The women of the neighborhood would carry on conversations from them, and in the warm season these frames gave the street a southern look. It was liberating to feel such intimacy with life outside the house. Children, too, could make contact with their neighbors through the "Geräms," and I became the pet of the three brothers von Ochsenstein living across the street, the surviving sons of the deceased chief magistrate. They playfully occupied themselves with me in various ways.

My family used to enjoy telling about the many pranks those oth-

erwise very serious and solitary men put me up to. I will give only one example: There had just been a crockery fair, and not only had its wares been procured for our kitchen's immediate needs, but similar ones in miniature had been bought as playthings for us children. One fine afternoon, when the house was all quiet, I sat in the "Geräms" amusing myself with my pots and bowls. Tiring of this, I threw one out into the street and was pleased that it broke so merrily into pieces. The von Ochsensteins, who saw I was so delighted by this that I clapped my hands for joy, shouted "More!" Without hesitation I immediately hurled a pot, and then, to their continued shouts of "More!" eventually *all* my little bowls, saucepans, and mugs, onto the pavement. My neighbors kept on showing their approval, and I was more than happy to please them. But my supply was exhausted, and yet they went on shouting, "Still more!" So I ran straight into the kitchen and fetched some earthenware dishes, which of course made an even merrier spectacle as they broke; and I ran back and forth taking one dish after the other from the crockery shelf, where I could reach them in succession. And because those men would not be satisfied, all the tableware I could drag out was smashed to pieces in the same way. It was only later that someone came to hinder and restrain me. The damage was done, but in exchange for all that broken crockery there was at least a funny story, especially for the mischievous instigators, who delighted in it to the end of their days.

The house actually belonged to my paternal grandmother, who lived in a large back room adjacent to the entrance hall. We used to play our games right beside her chair, and, when she was ill, right beside her bed. I remember her as being like an apparition—a beautiful, slender woman always dressed immaculately in white. She lives on in my memory in her gentleness, amiability, and benevolence.

We knew that our street was called the "Deer Close," and since neither deer nor enclosure were to be seen, we asked for an explanation of the name. We were told that our house stood on ground that had formerly been outside the town, and what was now a street had been a walled enclosure in which deer were kept. The animals had been penned and fed there because of the senate's tradition of holding an annual venison banquet in public. A supply was always on hand in the enclosure for this festivity, even if princes and knights were contesting or encroaching on the town's hunting rights in the surrounding territory, or enemies were closing off and besieging the town. This explanation pleased us very much, and we only wished the domesticated game preserve were still there in our day.

From the rear of the house, especially from the top story, there was a most pleasant view over an almost endless expanse of neighboring gardens, right up to the town wall. Unfortunately, however, our house

and some others near the street corner had been badly encroached on when the local common was converted to private gardens. Whereas the houses on the Horse Market side acquired rambling outbuildings and large gardens, ours was cut off by the high wall of the courtyard from all these nearby amenities.

On the third floor was the "garden room," so called because a few plants had been set before the window in an attempt to make up for the lack of a real garden. As I grew older, that became my favorite refuge, not for indulging in sad thoughts, but for dreaming. Beyond those gardens, beyond the city walls and defenses one could see a lovely fertile plain, the one that extends in the direction of Höchst. In the summer I would do my lessons there, or take shelter from storms, and I could never get my fill of watching the setting sun, toward which those windows were exactly directed. I would also see the neighbors strolling in their gardens and tending their flower beds, the children playing, and people enjoying themselves at parties. I would hear the skittle balls rolling and the skittles falling. This aroused a feeling of loneliness in me at an early age and led to longings associated with my inborn tendency to seriousness and presentiment; the effect was not only immediate but increased as time went on.

Moreover, the house, constructed in the old way with many corners and gloomy places, was suited for awakening fearful shivers in our childish hearts. Unfortunately, the theory of child rearing then current required the young to be weaned without delay from all fear of the invisible and ominous, and to be inured to horror. Therefore we children had to sleep by ourselves, and if, not being able to bear it, we crept out of bed to seek the servants' company, then our father—sufficiently disguised for us by having turned his dressing gown inside out—would block our path and frighten us back into our beds. Anyone can imagine what a bad effect that had. How can a person be cured of fear by being wedged between two fearsome things? My mother, who was always cheerful and happy and liked others to be the same, figured out a better method of instruction: she knew she could reach her goal by offering rewards. It was the season for peaches, and she promised us our fill of them in the morning if we overcame our fears at night. This worked out to our mutual satisfaction.

Inside the house, my attention was primarily attracted to a series of scenes of Rome which my father had used to decorate a corridor. They had been engraved by some skilled predecessors of Piranesi who understood architecture and perspective and employed their engraving tools precisely and creditably. Daily I looked at the Piazza del Popolo, the Coliseum, St. Peter's Square, St. Peter's Basilica from within and without, the Castel Sant Angelo, and much besides. These edifices made a deep impression on me, and our usually laconic father was sometimes

good enough to favor us with a commentary on them. He had a marked partiality for the Italian language and everything pertaining to Italy. Occasionally he would also show us the little collection of marble and natural history specimens he had brought back from there. A great deal of his time was spent on the travel account he had written in Italian, the copying and editing of which he was doing himself, slowly and painstakingly, notebook after notebook. A cheerful old Italian tutor named Giovanazzi was his assistant. This old fellow had a fair singing voice, and it devolved upon my mother to accompany him and herself daily on the piano. Thus I soon became acquainted with "Solitario bosco ombroso" and learned the words of this song by heart before I had an inkling of their meaning.

My father had a strong didactic bent, and, having no other occupation, he was always eager to teach everyone else what he knew or was able to do. In the first years of their marriage he had kept my mother diligently writing, playing the piano, and singing, and at the same time she saw herself obliged to acquire some knowledge and elementary skill in the Italian language.

We ordinarily spent our free hours with Grandmother, whose spacious quarters afforded us plenty of room for our games. She always knew how to keep us occupied with this and that, and treated us to all sorts of tidbits. One Christmas Eve, however, she crowned her good deeds by arranging a puppet show for us, creating, as it were, a new world inside the old house. This unexpected performance was powerfully attractive to our young hearts. It made an especially strong impression on the boy, which lingered and became a great, lasting influence.

When the demonstration was over, the little stage and its mute actors were handed over to us so that we could practice with them and put on our own plays. Naturally the puppet theater became even more precious to us children when we realized that it would be our good grandmother's last gift. Soon afterwards, we were not allowed to see her any more because of her worsening illness, and then death took her from us forever. Her passing was of particularly great significance to the family since it brought about a complete change in our living arrangements.

As long as Grandmother was alive, Father had been careful not to change or renovate the slightest detail of the house; but everyone was aware that he was planning a major construction project, which was now to be undertaken immediately. Frankfurt, like some other old towns, had allowed the construction of wooden buildings whose second and all subsequent floors projected past the ground floor in a continuous slant, to gain more living space. As a result, the streets, especially the narrower ones, took on a gloomy and anxious air. Finally, a new law was passed to the effect that any new house being built from the ground

up could extend beyond the foundation line only with its second floor, while the rest would have to rise vertically above that. My father was far more concerned about good, comfortable interior arrangements than about external architecture, and did not want to sacrifice the extended space in the third story. Therefore, like others before him, he resorted to the subterfuge of placing supports under the upper portions of the house and then removing one floor after the other, from the bottom to the top, and replacing them with new ones. Although at last practically nothing of the old was left, the entire new construction could still pass for repairs. The pulling down and reconstructing gradually began to take place now, but still my father was determined not to move out of the house, so that he might better oversee the work and give instructions (for he was quite knowledgeable about the technical side of building); at the same time, he did not want to be separated from his family. This new state of affairs puzzled and astonished us children. These were the very rooms in which we had often been closely confined and plagued with disagreeable lessons and studies; these were the very corridors in which we had played; these were the very walls we had been so constantly admonished to keep clean and unblemished! To see all of this fall beneath the mason's ax and the carpenter's hatchet, and what is more, in reverse order, from bottom up! And meanwhile to hover, as it were, up there in the air on supported rafters, and yet to be held to a particular lesson, a definite piece of work! It put more confusion into our young heads than could easily be straightened out again. On the other hand, we youngsters did not mind the inconvenience of the situation very much, for we were allowed a little more space to play in than before, and there were lots of opportunities to rock on beams and swing on boards.

Father stubbornly persisted with his plan during the first stage; but when at last a part of the roof was also removed, and the oilcloth (made from our stripped-off wallcoverings) that had been stretched over the space did not prevent the rain from dripping onto our beds, he reluctantly decided to leave us children for a while with kindly friends who had offered their hospitality earlier; and we were sent to a public school.

This temporary arrangement had its unpleasant side. We children had previously been isolated in our home, where we were kept clean and proper, if rather strictly disciplined. Now we were thrust into a crowd of rough young creatures, and quite unexpectedly became the victims of their common, base, even vile behavior, because we entirely lacked the weapons and ability to defend ourselves.

It was actually about this time that I first became aware of the town of my fathers, inasmuch as I began to walk up and down in it, always venturing farther. Sometimes I was alone, at other times in the lively company of my playfellows. In order to give some idea of the impression

made on me by my sober and dignified surroundings, I will have to interpolate a description here of the town as it gradually revealed itself to me in its various parts. My favorite promenade was across the great bridge over the Main. Its length, solidity, and fine appearance made it a noteworthy edifice, and it is almost the only one we have from earlier times that is a monument to the care which the secular government owes its citizens. The beautiful river drew my gaze up and downstream, and if the golden cock atop the bridge crucifix was gleaming in the sun, this always gave me a feeling of pleasure. Usually I would then stroll through Sachsenhausen and, for a kreuzer, enjoy a very comfortable ride back. Once again on this side, I would slip over to the Wine Market and marvel at the mechanism of cranes as goods were being unloaded. My friends and I found the arrival of cargo ships particularly entertaining, because a great variety of people, occasionally very odd ones, disembarked from them. If our way led back into town, we always respectfully saluted the Salic House, for its site, at least, was that where the castle of Charlemagne and his successors was said to have stood. We would immerse ourselves in the old trade district and gladly mingled with the throngs gathered, especially on market days, around the church of St. Bartholomew. Since earliest times, a large number of salesmen and merchants had always been crowded and piled up together here and were so firmly entrenched that in modern times there was little chance of installing any commodious and attractive facility. The booths in the so-called Parish Fence Lane meant most to us children, and many was the small coin we carried there to buy colored sheets of paper imprinted with golden animals! Rarely, on the other hand, did we care to push and shove our way across the dirty, narrow, overcrowded marketplace. I remember always having fled in horror from the ugly, cramped butcher stalls adjacent to it. The Roman Hill was a far more pleasant place for strolling. Access to the new part of town was through the New Market, always a pretty walk that lifted one's spirits, except that it was annoying not to have any street lead past the Church of Our Lady and into the Row, so that we always had to go a long roundabout way through Hare Lane and St. Catherine's Gate. We children were particularly fascinated by the many little towns within the town, or fortresses within the fortress—I mean the walled-in cloister precincts and the more or less castle-like buildings remaining from earlier centuries, e.g., the Nuremberg House, the Compstela, the Braunfels, the ancestral home of the von Stallburgs, and several other strongholds refashioned in later times as dwellings and business establishments. Nothing architecturally uplifting was to be seen in Frankfurt at that time. Everything was indicative of a distant past that had been full of unrest both in the town and the surrounding region. Towers and gates marked the boundary of the old town; more towers, gates, walls,

bridges, embankments, and trenches enclosed the new town. Plainly, all this had resulted from the necessity of insuring the community's security in times of trouble. The streets and squares, including the new ones that were laid out more broadly and handsomely, all owed their origin to chance and arbitrary action rather than to any plan. The boy developed a certain fondness for antiquities, and this was nurtured and encouraged by old chronicles and woodcuts, as, for example, Grave's woodcut of the siege of Frankfurt. He also began to appreciate simple human conditions in all their naturalness and variety, without further claim to interest or beauty. A favorite walk, one that we undertook, if possible, several times a year, was on the galleryway along the inner side of the town wall. Gardens, courtyards, and outbuildings extended up to the narrow space bordering the wall; several thousand human beings could be observed in their little hidden, sealed-off, domestic conditions. From the purely ornamental gardens of the rich to the rows of fruit trees planted by practical-minded burghers, from there to factories, bleaching grounds, and similar establishments, and even to the graveyard (for a whole little world lay within the precincts of the town), the way went past the most diverse, strange, and ever-changing spectacle, and our childish curiosity never tired of it. Truly, the noted limping devil,¹ who obliged his friend by lifting up the nocturnal roofs of Madrid, hardly did more than was done for us here under the open sky in the bright sunshine. We needed keys to come through the various towers, stairways, and gates on this way, and since these were in the keeping of the masters of the arsenal, we did not neglect to get into the good graces of their underlings.

Still more significant and instructive for us, in another sense, was the city hall, called "the Roman." We liked nothing better than to wander about in its vaulted lower rooms. We managed to gain entry to the large, austere simple meeting room of the council. Its walls were paneled part of the way up, but the rest, including the vaulted ceilings, was white, without a trace of paint or other decoration. There was just a brief inscription high up on the middle wall, which read,

One man's word
Is no man's word,
Properly let both be heard.

In the most old-fashioned way, the benches for the members of this assembly were arranged around the walls next to the paneling, and raised one step from the floor. There we easily understood why the hierarchy of our senate was classified by benches. The jurors were seated from the left-hand door to the corner opposite, that is, on the first bench. In the corner itself sat the chief magistrate, the only one to have a little table in front of him. At his left, up to the side with the

window, sat the gentlemen of the second bench. By the windows themselves stood the third bench, which the tradesmen occupied. In the middle of the hall was a table for the keeper of the minutes.

Once inside the Roman, we mingled with the crowds awaiting audiences with the burgomasters. Much more attractive to us, however, was everything connected with the election and coronation of the emperors. We ingratiated ourselves with the doorkeepers, so as to be permitted to ascend the bright new imperial staircase, all decorated with frescos, which was locked away behind a grating. The election chamber, which had purple wall coverings with strangely convoluted gold borders, filled us with awe. We looked very intently at the door panels, on which little children, or perhaps cherubs, were shown dressed in imperial robes and weighed down with imperial insignia, so that they looked very odd indeed; and we hoped to see a coronation with our own eyes some day. Once we had finally succeeded in slipping into the great imperial hall, it was very hard to persuade us to leave again. To us, our truest friend was any person who would tell us something about the deeds of those emperors whose half-length portraits, a complete series of them, were painted on the walls at a certain height.

About Charlemagne we heard many a legendary account. For us, true historical interest first started with Rudolph of Habsburg, who through his manliness put an end to great disorders. Charles IV claimed our attention also. We already knew all about his Golden Bull and Rules for Criminal Courts,² and his not having taken vengeance on the burghers of Frankfurt in spite of their support of the noble anti-emperor, Günther von Schwarzburg.³ Maximilian⁴ was extolled to us as a friend of mankind and of burghers, and we heard how it had been foretold that he would be the last emperor from a German house. Unfortunately this had come true, inasmuch as after his death the choice was only between the king of Spain, Charles V, and the king of France, Francis I. Our informants added ominously that another such prophecy or, rather, a feeling of foreboding was making the rounds, for it was obvious that there was only room enough left for the portrait of one more emperor. This circumstance, although apparently a chance happening, filled patriotic hearts with anxiety.

When we were engaged in a tour of the town, we did not neglect going to the cathedral, either, in order to visit the grave of that worthy Günther von Schwarzburg, who was esteemed by friend and foe alike. The remarkable stone which used to cover it has now been set up in the choir. The door directly next to it, leading to the Conclave, was closed to us for a long time until at last we appealed to the higher officials and were granted entry into this place of great significance. But it would have been better had we continued just to imagine it, as before; for this room, though such a noteworthy one in German history,

the place where the most powerful German princes customarily assembled in order to decide something of such great importance, was not only very poorly decorated but, into the bargain, was being unworthily used as a storage place for beams, poles, scaffolding, and other things of that nature. But our imagination was stirred and our spirits raised when, shortly afterwards, we were permitted to be present at the city hall while the Golden Bull was being shown to some distinguished foreign visitors.

The boy took in very eagerly what his parents, older relatives, and acquaintances liked to tell and retell, namely, the story of the two most recent coronations, which had taken place in quick succession. Without exception, every citizen of Frankfurt past a certain age considered these two events and everything associated with them as the high points of his life. The coronation of Charles VII⁵ had been a gorgeous affair, and some especially splendid feasts, both costly and in good taste, had been given by the French envoy; this, however, only made the good Emperor's subsequent fate seem sadder, when he could not occupy his capital, Munich, and more or less had to beg for the hospitality of the imperial free cities.

The coronation of Francis I may have been less strikingly magnificent, but it was glorified by the presence of Maria Theresa, whose beauty evidently made just as great an impression on the men as Charles VII's serious, dignified figure and blue eyes had made on the women. The two sexes, at any rate, vied with each other in giving the attentive boy a very favorable concept of these two personages. All these descriptions and accounts were given in a cheerful and secure frame of mind, for the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle⁶ had temporarily put an end to all feuds; and just as was the case with those festivities, one spoke with pleasure about the past campaigns, the battle of Dettingen, and all the other remarkable events of recent years. As usual, once a peace has been concluded, one would think that all those important and perilous things had occurred merely to keep happy and carefree persons entertained.

No more than half a year had passed in this patriotic smugness when the fairs began again, always creating incredible ferment in the children's minds. In a brief space of time, a new town would rise within the town, owing to the construction of a great many booths, and the surge of activity, the unloading and unpacking of wares, awakened in the boy, from his first conscious moments onwards, an uncontrollably active curiosity and a boundless desire for childish possessions; as he grew, he tried to satisfy this in one way or another, to the extent his small purse permitted. At the same time he was forming an idea of all the things the world produces, what it needs, and what the inhabitants of its various parts exchange with each other.

These glorious spring and autumn events were ushered in with curious

ceremonies, which seemed all the worthier because they vividly represented the olden days and what had come down to us from them. On Escort Day the whole populace was in the streets, pressing toward Passage Lane, the bridge, and up and beyond Sachsenhausen; all the windows were full of spectators, even though nothing very interesting would happen during the daylight hours. The crowd just seemed to be there to be crowded, and the spectators just to observe each other. What they were waiting for would not come to pass until nightfall, and then it would have to be accepted in good faith rather than actually be seen.

Namely, in those old unsettled times, when one did as one pleased, whether it was just or unjust, the merchants going to the fairs were arbitrarily harassed and set upon by highwaymen of both noble and common origin. Accordingly, princes and other powerful nobles had their people escorted to Frankfurt by an armed guard. However, the burghers of the free city, who were unwilling to concede any of their own or their territory's rights, would go out to meet the visitors. Sometimes there were conflicts about how far those escorts could advance or whether their ride into town could be accomplished. The problem did not arise only in connection with trade and the fairs, but also whenever high personages, in time of peace or war, and especially for the imperial elections, betook themselves to Frankfurt, and it was not uncommon for fighting to break out when a retinue the town was unwilling to admit wanted to force its way in with its lord. Therefore negotiations had been going on concerning this for a long time, and many truces had been agreed to, though always with reservations on both sides. Hope for a final settlement of the centuries-old dispute was not being abandoned, however, since the elections on whose account it had been carried on for so long and often very violently could now be considered useless, or at best superfluous.

Meanwhile the municipal cavalry would still ride out in several groups and from various gates on those days, and at a certain spot would find some horsemen or hussars belonging to whatever imperial dignitaries were entitled to an escort. These men, along with their commanders, were received and shown hospitality. They would linger until toward evening, and then, when the waiting crowd could hardly see them, they would ride back into town; for by that time many a citizen-rider was no longer able to handle his horse or sit astride it. The most significant processions entered by the Bridge Gate, and consequently the crowd would be densest near there. Last of all, after nightfall, the Nuremberg stagecoach would arrive with the same kind of escort, and on everyone's mind was the rumor that traditionally an old woman would always be sitting in it. For this reason the street urchins would break out in a shrill cry at its approach, even though the coach passengers were by

no means distinguishable any more. The pressure of the crowd rushing after the coach in this moment through the Bridge Gate was incredible and actually made one's senses reel. Therefore spectators would prefer to seek the nearest houses.

Another ceremony, more curious by far, and which stirred up the public in broad daylight, was the Pipers' Court. This ritual recalled those early times when the important commercial towns were trying, if not to dispense with, at least to moderate the customs duties that were rising in direct proportion to business and trade. The emperor, who needed the towns, granted them freedom from tolls insofar as it was in his power, but usually only for one year at a time, and therefore this had to be renewed annually. It was accomplished by means of symbolic gifts brought to the imperial chief magistrate (who not infrequently was also the chief customs officer) prior to the opening of the St. Bartholomew's Fair. Propriety demanded that this be done as he sat in court session with the jurors. In later years, when the magistrate was no longer appointed by the emperor but elected by the town itself, he still retained these privileges; and what had come down to our times was not only the freedom from tolls enjoyed by the several towns, but also the ceremonies by which the delegates from Worms, Nuremberg, and Old Bamberg showed their appreciation for this ancient favor. On the day before the festival of Mary's Nativity, a public court session would be announced. In the great Imperial Hall, the jurors sat elevated above the floor and behind a barrier, while in their midst, but one step higher, was the chief magistrate; the procurators empowered by the parties sat below, on the right side. Now the actuary would begin to read aloud the important judgments saved up for this day, whereupon the procurators would ask for a copy and appeal the verdict, or do whatever else they deemed necessary.

All at once a strange-sounding music would announce, as it were, the arrival of bygone centuries. It was made by three pipers, one blowing an old shawm, the second a tuba, the third a bombard or oboe. They wore blue cloaks trimmed with gold, their music was fastened to their sleeves, and their heads were covered. That was how they left their inn at ten o'clock sharp, preceding the delegates and their retinue, to the amazement of townsfolk and strangers; and that was how they stepped into the hall. The court proceedings would halt while the pipers and their followers stood before the barrier and the delegate entered, positioning himself opposite the chief magistrate. In strict conformity with the old tradition, the symbolical gifts were now demanded, usually consisting of things known to be prime articles of trade in the town offering them. Pepper, in a sense, symbolized all wares, and so the first delegate would bring a beautifully turned wooden goblet filled with pepper. Draped over it was a pair of gloves, marvelously slit, and quilted

and tasseled in silk, as a token, used in certain cases even by the Emperor himself, of a privilege extended and accepted. Next to the goblet was to be seen a little white staff,⁷ which in the old days could not easily be dispensed with at legal and court actions. Added to this, there were some small silver coins; and the town of Worms also offered an old felt hat, which it always immediately redeemed again, with the result that the hat had been a witness of these ceremonies for many years.

After the delegate had made his speech and presented his gift, and had received assurance from the magistrate that the privilege would be continued, he would remove himself from the closed circle, the pipers would blow, and the procession would leave as it had come. Then the court would resume its business, until the second and finally the third delegate were introduced—for they came only at intervals, partly in order to prolong the public's pleasure, and partly because there was only the one group of virtuosi in ancient music, which Nuremberg accepted the responsibility of bringing every year for its own entertainment and that of its sister towns.

We children had a special stake in this ceremony, for we were more than a little proud to see our grandfather in such a seat of honor, and besides, on the same day we would pay him a discreet visit, so that we might, providing Grandmother had already poured the pepper into her spice drawers, acquire for ourselves a goblet and a staff, a pair of gloves, or an old silver penny. These symbolic rituals summoned up the past like magic, as it were, and the explanation of them led us back into bygone centuries. Then we would eagerly inquire about the customs, manners, and sentiments of our forebears, who had brought themselves to mind in such a strange way, by means of resurrected pipers and delegates, and, not least, through tangible gifts that we could possess.

Venerable solemnities of this kind gave way, when the season of good weather arrived, to some festivals held outside the town, under the open sky, that were more suited for children. Downstream on the right bank of the Main, about half an hour's walk from the town gate, a sulphur spring comes bubbling up; it is neatly walled in and is surrounded by ancient lindens. Not far off stands the Inn of the Good People, formerly a hospital built to serve this spring. Round about is a common, to which, on a certain day of the year, herds of cattle from the neighborhood were brought together while the herdsmen and their sweethearts celebrated a country festival with songs and dances, and all kinds of amusements and pranks. On the other side of town there was a similar but larger common, also set off by a spring and even more beautiful lindens. At Pentecost, the herds of sheep were driven there, and, likewise, the poor, pale-faced orphan children were allowed to come out from behind their walls into the open air. Only later did

it occur to anyone that it would be better if these forlorn creatures, who some day must make their own way through the world, were brought into contact with it early, instead of being so drearily penned up. They should be made accustomed at once to subservience and patient endurance, and it is only reasonable to develop both their physical and moral strength from childhood on. Our nursemaids always fancied outings for themselves, and so they did not fail to take us to these places, first carrying us as babies, then leading us by the hand. Consequently, these country festivals are among the earliest impressions I can recall.

Meanwhile the house had been finished, and actually within a fairly short time, thanks to the fact that everything had been well pondered and prepared, and the necessary sum of money provided for. Now we found ourselves reunited, and felt at home again. For a well-conceived plan, once it is executed, makes one forget all the inconveniences that may have been associated with the means of arriving at this goal. For a private dwelling, the house was adequately spacious. It was thoroughly bright and cheerful, the staircase unenclosed, the corridors pleasant, and the view over the gardens readily enjoyable from several windows. Completion of the interior and everything connected with finishing and decoration proceeded gradually and served both as employment and entertainment.

The first thing to be put in order was my father's book collection; the best books, bound or partly bound in calf, were to embellish the walls of his study. He had the beautiful Dutch editions of the Latin authors, all of which he tried to get in quarto format to make their appearance uniform. He also owned many works dealing with Roman antiquities, and law books of the more elegant sort. The principal Italian authors were not lacking: Tasso was his favorite. The best of the new travel books were there too, and he took pleasure in making his own emendations and additions to Keyssler and Nemeiz.⁸ He had also surrounded himself with the most necessary study aids—dictionaries of various languages and encyclopedias that one could consult at will, as well as many other useful and entertaining works.

The other half of this book collection, consisting of clean parchment volumes with very beautifully handwritten titles, was set up in a special room in the attic. His manner of purchasing new books, then of having them bound and shelved, was very sober and systematic. In this he was greatly influenced by the announcements in the learned journals which proclaimed the special merits of this or that work. His collection of legal dissertations increased in size by several volumes annually.

Next, the paintings, which had been scattered through the old house, were from now on hung symmetrically on the walls of a cheerful room adjoining the study, all of them in black frames adorned with little gold

bars. My father's maxim, which he frequently and even passionately expressed, was that one should patronize living masters and spend less on dead ones, the appreciation of whom was mixed with a good deal of prejudice. He had the notion that the situation with paintings is exactly as it is with Rhine wines, which, even though age confers a superior value on them, can be produced just as excellently in every successive year as in the years past. In the course of time the new wine grows old too, and will be just as costly, and perhaps even more palatable. He confirmed himself in this opinion especially by observing that some old pictures had apparently become of great value to collectors simply by having grown darker and browner, and the harmonious tone of such a picture was often praised. On the other hand, my father declared that he had no qualms at all about his pictures turning black eventually too; but he would not admit that this might improve them.

In accord with these principles, he had kept all the artists in Frankfurt busy for several years: the painter Hirt,⁹ whose forte was painting oak and beech woods and other so-called rustic locales, complete with cattle; also Trautmann, who imitated Rembrandt and was so proficient at painting enclosed lights and reflections, as well as impressive fire scenes, that he was once commissioned to do a companion piece to a picture by Rembrandt; also Schütz, who followed Sachtleben's¹⁰ lead in diligently painting scenes of the Rhine region; and Juncker too, who, in the Dutch manner, very neatly executed flower and fruit pieces, still lifes, and scenes of persons quietly occupied. Now, however, his interest in collecting was stirred afresh by the new orderliness, the more suitable room, and his acquaintanceship with a skilled artist. This was Seekatz, a pupil of the Darmstadt court painter Brinckmann. His character and talent will be developed for us in greater detail farther on.

The completion of the other rooms proceeded in this way, each according to its designated purpose. Cleanliness and order prevailed throughout, and large windowpanes of plate glass were the main factor in achieving a perfect brightness, something that had been lacking in the old house for several reasons, but chiefly because most of the windowpanes were round. Father looked cheerful because everything had turned out so well, and if the occasional failure of the workmen to meet his standards of diligence and exactness had not sometimes interrupted his good humor, no happier life could have been imagined, especially since many good things were happening within the family and also coming to it from outside.

However, the boy's tranquillity of mind was deeply shaken for the first time by an extraordinary event. On the first of November, 1755, occurred the great earthquake of Lisbon, spreading enormous terror over a world grown accustomed to peace and quiet. A large, splendid city, both a port and trade center, is hit without warning by the most

fearful calamity. The earth quivers and rocks, the sea rages, ships collide, houses collapse, churches and towers fall on top of them, the royal palace is partly swallowed up by the sea, and the severed earth seems to spit flames, for everywhere the ruins begin to smoke and burn. Sixty thousand human beings, who were calm and content just a moment before, perish together, and the happiest man among them is he who had no time to feel or consider his misfortune. The flames rage on, and with them rages a mob of criminals, now coming out into the open, or perhaps set free by the disaster. The unfortunate survivors are exposed to robbery, murder, and every possible mistreatment; and so nature on every hand asserts her arbitrary will.

Indications of this event preceded the tidings themselves over vast stretches of land. Weaker shocks were felt in many places, and an unusual cessation of flow was noticed in many springs, especially those with healing waters. This only made the effect of the news greater when it finally came—first the general information and then, shortly afterwards, the dreadful details. Hereupon, God-fearing persons were moved to wise observations, philosophers offered consoling arguments, and clergymen preached fiery sermons. So much happening at once drew the world's attention for a while to this one spot, and hearts already stirred by distant misfortunes were made still uneasy by worries about themselves and their families when reports, in ever greater volume and detail, came in from every side about the wide-ranging effects of this explosion. Indeed, the demon of terror has perhaps at no other time spread its chill over the world as quickly and powerfully.

Having to hear all of this repeatedly, I was more than a little disconcerted by it in my boyish mind. God, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, who had been presented to me as so very wise and merciful in the explanation of the first article of the Creed, had shown Himself by no means fatherly when He abandoned both the just and the unjust to the same destruction. My young mind tried in vain to resist these impressions, and it was not made any easier for me by the philosophers and scholars when they themselves could not agree on the way to view such a phenomenon.

The following summer gave me an opportunity closer to home to make the direct acquaintance of the God of Wrath spoken about so often in the Old Testament. An unexpected and most violent hail storm arose, accompanied by thunder and lightning, and it shattered the large panes of glass at the rear of the house (which faced west), damaging the furniture and ruining, among other valuable things, some prized books. What made matters worse for us children was that all the house servants frantically pulled us out with them into a dark passageway where, kneeling, they set up a terrible howling and crying in an attempt to appease the angry deity. Father was the only one to keep his com-

posure, and it was he who meanwhile pulled the casements open and lifted them out of their frames, by which means, to be sure, he saved some panes of glass but also gave a freer entry to the driving rain which followed the hail. As a result, when it was finally over we saw ourselves surrounded by floods of running water in the corridors and on the stairs.

Such occurrences, disturbing as they were on the whole, only slightly interrupted the pace and progress of the instruction which Father himself had undertaken to give us children. He had spent his youth at the academy in Coburg, which was considered one of the best German schools. There he had been given a good grounding in languages and whatever else was accounted part of a scholarly education; afterwards he studied law in Leipzig and eventually took his doctorate in Giessen. His dissertation, *Electa de aditione hereditatis*,¹¹ was written with all seriousness and diligence, and it is still quoted with approval by law professors.

All fathers cherish the pious wish to see their sons achieve what they themselves have not managed to do; they want to live, as it were, a second time and now really profit from the experience of their first existence. Being conscious of his own knowledge and sure of his own faithful perseverance—and mistrustful of the teachers of that time—my father resolved to instruct his children himself, and only when necessary would he employ regular teachers for individual lessons. A certain pedagogical dilettantism was already beginning to manifest itself, in any case. It may well have been stimulated originally by the pedantry and gloominess of the teachers employed in the public schools. People were seeking something better, but forgot that all instruction not given by professionally trained people is necessarily imperfect.

Thus far my father had succeeded in living his life more or less as he wished. I was to pursue the same path, only farther and more comfortably. He valued my native gifts all the more since he lacked them himself. He had only been able to acquire his knowledge through endless diligence, perseverance, and repetition. He frequently assured me, both in my childhood and later, and both in jest and earnest, that with abilities like mine he would have behaved quite differently from me and would not have been so slovenly about managing them.

Since I not only grasped everything quickly but also digested and retained it, I very soon outgrew the instruction my father and other tutors could give me; but I was not really well grounded in anything. I disliked grammar because to me it was merely an arbitrary law; the rules seemed absurd because they were cancelled by so many exceptions, all of which I was supposed to learn separately. And had it not been for the beginner's rhyming Latin book, things would have looked bad for me; but this I did like to tap out and sing for myself. We also

had a geography book with mnemonic verses, and it was the silliest rhymes that best imprinted information on our memories, for example:

Upper Yssel: it's all mire,
This good land is none's desire.

I easily grasped the forms and idioms, and also quickly figured out the concepts of things. No one excelled me in matters of rhetoric—themes and the like—although my grade was often lowered on account of grammatical errors. Yet it was such compositions that especially pleased my father, who often rewarded me for them with what was no trifling sum of money for a boy.

My father taught my sister Italian in the same room where I was supposed to memorize Cellarius.¹² Since I was soon finished with my assignment but had to stay sitting there quietly, I listened from behind my book and very adroitly learned Italian, which struck me as being an amusing deviation from Latin.

There were other precocious abilities involving memory and synthesis that I had in common with children who have won early fame on account of them. Hence my father could hardly wait for me to go to the university. Very soon he declared that I, like him, should study law in Leipzig, to which he had remained very partial; and then I should attend another university to take my degree. It was immaterial which one I would choose, except that he felt some aversion, I do not know why, to Göttingen.¹³ I was grieved about this, for it was the very one I had great confidence in and on which I had set high hopes.

He told me further that I was to go to Wetzlar and Regensburg,¹⁴ and thence to Italy, although he repeatedly asserted that one must see Paris first, since it would suffer by comparison if delayed until the return trip from Italy.

I liked having him tell me this tale about my future youthful progress, especially since it always developed into a report on Italy and eventually a description of Naples. Invariably his earlier dry seriousness would seem to dissolve and he became animated, and so a passionate desire awoke in us children to partake of this paradise also.

The private tutoring lessons gradually increased in number, and neighbor children took them along with me. This shared instruction did not benefit me: the teachers went along in their old routine, and the rude, sometimes even malicious, behavior of my fellow pupils filled the meager class hours with unrest, annoyance, and disturbance. We were not yet so fortunate as to have anthologies, which make learning pleasant and varied. There was nothing interesting about Cornelius Nepos, who seems very stiff to children, or about Cellarius and Pasor,¹⁵ or about the New Testament, which was too easy and in any case had

been done to death for us in sermons and religious instruction. On the other hand, our reading of German poets had instilled in us a certain mania for rhymes and verses. Its power over me had been demonstrated earlier, when I amused myself by switching from rhetorical to poetical treatment of my assignments.

We boys had a regular Sunday meeting at which each of us was supposed to present verses composed by himself. And here I observed something strange, which disturbed me for a long time. Naturally I judged my poems to be superior, whatever they might be. But I soon noticed that my competitors, in spite of the weakness of their productions, felt just like me, and had an equally high opinion of themselves. Indeed, and this seemed even more dubious to me, a good fellow whom, moreover, I liked, but who was so totally untalented that his tutor wrote his rhymes for him, not only considered these the best but was also fully convinced he had written them himself—as, since we were quite good friends, he would always sincerely declare to me. Face to face with such error and delusion, I sadly wondered one day whether I myself might not be like them, whether perhaps their poems really were better than mine, and whether I might not justly seem as absurd to those boys as they seemed to me. For a long time this seriously worried me, for I found it quite impossible to discover an external criterion for truth. Indeed, my productions even came to a standstill, until calm was finally restored by my lightheartedness and self-esteem, and not least by an extemporaneous test administered by our teachers and parents, who had gotten wind of our games. For I passed it with distinction and garnered universal praise.

No children's libraries had as yet been founded. The older people still had childlike attitudes themselves and thought it fitting to pass their own level of culture on to their progeny. The *Orbis pictus* of Amos Comenius¹⁶ was the only book of its kind to find its way into our hands. However, we frequently leafed through the great folio Bible with its engravings by Merian;¹⁷ and Gottfried's *Chronicle*, with engravings by the same master, taught us about the most remarkable events in world history. The *Acerra philologica*¹⁸ added a variety of fables, mythological information, and oddities. And since I also soon became aware of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and diligently studied particularly its first books, my young brain was very quickly filled with a mass of images and adventures, and significant and wonderful figures and events, and all boredom was banished while I occupied myself with digesting, repeating, and reproducing what I read.

Those antiquities were sometimes crude and dangerous, and a more pious and moral effect was made by Fénélon's *Télémaque*, which I first read only in the Neukirch translation, but even in that most imperfect form it had a very sweet and beneficial influence on my disposition. It

was probably a natural development that *Robinson Crusoe* was soon added to the list, and of course *The Island Felsenburg*¹⁹ was not missing. Lord Anson's *Trip around the World*²⁰ was a combination of dignified truth and imaginative story-telling, and as we accompanied this admirable seaman in our thoughts, we were led far out into the world and tried to follow him on the globe with our fingers. Then a still more abundant harvest was in store for me when I came upon a mass of writings which may have no claim to excellence in their present form, but whose contents, nevertheless, naively acquaint us with many a virtue of bygone times.

The publishing house, or rather factory, for those books that subsequently became known and even famous under the title "folk literature" or "chapbooks" was right there in Frankfurt, and for the sake of large sales they were printed in stereotype, almost illegibly, on the poorest quality blotting paper. Thus we children had the good fortune to find these worthy remains of the Middle Ages lying before us daily on a little table just outside the door of a second-hand book dealer, and could buy them for a few kreuzers. *Till Eulenspiegel*, *The Four Sons of Aymon*, *The Beautiful Melusina*, *Emperor Octavian*, *The Beautiful Magelona*, *Fortunatus*, and all their kin up to and including *The Wandering Jew* were readily available whenever we felt disposed to reach for one of these works instead of some sweetmeat. The greatest advantage in this was that when such a booklet had been well thumbed or otherwise damaged, it could soon be replaced and devoured anew.

Just as a sudden storm interrupts a family's summer outing in a most disagreeable way, turning a happy situation into a most unpleasant one, the childhood illnesses unexpectedly break into the loveliest season of early life. I did not escape them either. I had just bought *Fortunatus* with his sack and wishing cap, when a fever and discomfort came over me that announced smallpox. Among us, inoculation was still viewed as very problematical, and although popular writers urgently recommended it, and in a comprehensible manner, German physicians hesitated to use a procedure that seemed to anticipate nature. Consequently, speculating Englishmen came over to the Continent and, for a considerable fee, inoculated the children of persons they found to be well-to-do and unprejudiced. The majority, however, were still exposed to the old malady. The illness raged through whole families, killing or disfiguring many children, but few parents dared to avail themselves of a preventive whose probable efficacy had been well established by its manifold successes. Now the disease struck our house too, and attacked me with special virulence. My whole body was dotted with pocks, and my face was so completely covered with them that I lay blind for several days, suffering greatly. Every possible way to alleviate my condition was tried, and I was promised whatever my heart desired

if I would only lie still and not make things worse with rubbing and scratching. I won this victory over myself; but all the while, in obedience to the prevailing prejudice, they kept us as warm as possible and thereby only made things worse. Finally, after much wretched time had passed, it was as though a mask fell from my face, without leaving a visible trace of the pocks on my skin; but my features were noticeably altered. For myself, I was happy just to be able to see daylight again and to lose the spotted skin little by little. Other people, however, were unkind enough to remind me frequently of my former condition. One vivacious aunt in particular, who had previously idolized me, could seldom look at me, even in later years, without exclaiming, "Fie, nephew! how horrid you are now!" Then she would tell me in detail how much delight she used to take in me, and what a stir she had made when she carried me about. And so I found out early in life that people often make us pay dearly for whatever pleasure we have afforded them.

I was spared neither measles, nor chickenpox, nor any of the other torments of childhood, whatever they are called, and after every one I was assured it was a blessing, for now that disease was gone forever. But unfortunately there was always another one in the background, threatening me and moving closer. All these things reinforced my propensity for reflection, and, since I had already often practiced the art of endurance with a view to ridding myself of the torments of impatience, I now made up my mind to imitate the virtues I had heard the Stoics praised for, being encouraged in this by the fact that something similar was recommended in the Christian doctrine of long-suffering.

In connection with this family misery I also want to mention a brother, three years younger than I, who caught the same infection and suffered a great deal from it. He was of a delicate constitution, and quietly obstinate; we never enjoyed a close relationship. Nor did he live much beyond early childhood. Of the other children who were born later and died young I remember only a very pretty and pleasing girl who also soon vanished, so that in the course of a few years my sister and I saw ourselves as the sole survivors, which made our ties to each other all the closer and more affectionate.

The aftermath of those illnesses and other interruptions was doubly burdensome, for my father, who had apparently set himself some schedule of education and instruction, wanted to make up immediately for every lapse in continuity, and so imposed doubled lessons on the convalescent children. They were, actually, not so hard for me to do, but they were troublesome because they retarded and to some extent repressed my inner development, which had now taken a definite direction.

Usually we fled to our grandparents for refuge from these didactic

and pedagogical afflictions. Their dwelling was in the Friedberg Lane, and apparently had once been a fortress, for as one approached it, nothing was to be seen but a large crenelated gate set between two neighboring houses. After entering this, one went through a long, narrow passageway into a rather broad courtyard surrounded by buildings of various sizes which had all been joined into one dwelling. We would hasten at once into the garden, which stretched out in impressive length and breadth behind these buildings and was very well kept. The walks were mostly lined with grape arbors, and one section was devoted to kitchen plants, another to flowers, which bloomed in abundant variety in the beds and borders from spring to autumn. The long wall to the south was used to support well-trained espaliered peach trees, whose forbidden fruit tantalized us all summer as it ripened. But we preferred to avoid this side, where we were not permitted to indulge our sweet tooth, and turned instead to the opposite one, because here an endless row of currant and gooseberry bushes offered one harvest after the other to our gluttony, even into the autumn. Of equal moment for us was a tall, wide-spreading old mulberry tree, not just for its fruit but also because we were told that silkworms fed on its leaves. Every evening Grandfather could be found in this peaceful preserve, tending personally and with unhurried diligence to the finer details of raising fruit and flowers; a gardener did the rougher work. The manifold pains one must take to conserve and increase the blossoming of pinks never daunted him. He himself carefully bound the peach trees in fan shape to the lattices, so as to promote an abundant and convenient growth of fruit. He left the sorting of tulip, hyacinth, and other such bulbs, as well as the responsibility for keeping them over winter, to no one else. I still fondly remember how tirelessly he occupied himself with grafting various types of roses. To protect himself from thorns while doing this, he would put on those old-fashioned leather gloves which he annually received three pairs of at the Pipers' Court, and so was never without a supply. And he always wore a dressing gown that looked like a lawyer's robe, and a wrinkled black velvet cap on his head, so that he could have played the role of a personage halfway between Alcinous and Laertes.

He attended to this gardening as regularly and precisely as to his official duties. He never came outside until he had read his reports and made up a register of persons who were scheduled to propose measures the next day. In like manner, he drove to the city hall in the morning, ate after he returned, nodded for a while in his big easychair, and thus the routine went, day in, day out. He spoke little, and never showed a trace of vehemence; I do not remember ever having seen him angry. Except for law books, his library contained nothing but the earliest

accounts of travels, ocean journeys, and discoveries of new lands. Certainly I do not remember any other environment which gave me as much a feeling of absolute peace and permanence as this one.

What increased our respect for this worthy old man to the highest degree, however, was our conviction that he possessed the gift of prophecy, especially in matters pertaining to himself and his destiny. It is true that he revealed nothing definite or detailed except to our grandmother, but we knew all the same that portentous dreams informed him about what was going to happen. Thus, for example, at the time when he was still one of the younger councilors, he assured his wife that he would be the one chosen when the next vacancy occurred on the jurors' bench. And when, shortly afterwards, one of the jurors actually suffered a stroke and died, he gave orders at home, on the day of election and balloting, that everything should quietly be prepared for the reception of guests and well-wishers. And the decisive golden ball was indeed drawn for him. He confided to his wife the simple dream that had foretold this, as follows: He had seen himself in the full regular council meeting, where everything was proceeding in the traditional way. Suddenly, however, the now deceased juror had risen from his seat, stepped down, and in an obliging way had invited him to occupy the vacated place; and had thereupon gone out the door.

Something similar happened at the death of the chief magistrate. When that occurs, no time is lost in filling the position, because there is always the danger that the emperor will once more claim his old right to appoint a magistrate. This time, at midnight, a court messenger came to announce an extraordinary session for the next morning. Seeing that the light in his lantern was about to go out, the messenger requested a candle stump, so that he might continue his rounds. "Give him a whole candle," Grandfather said to the women. "After all, he is going to this trouble on my account." The result bore out this statement: he really did become chief magistrate. And another very remarkable circumstance was that, although his representative at the balloting was the third and last to draw, the two silver balls emerged first, and so the golden one remained in the bottom of the bag for him.

The other dreams we came to know about were altogether prosaic, simple, and without a trace of the fantastic or marvelous. I remember further that as a boy I rummaged through his books and journals and, among notations concerning gardening, found this: "Last night so-and-so came to me and said . . ." The name and revelation were written in ciphers. Or this, written in the same manner: "Last night I saw . . ." The rest was again in ciphers, except for some conjunctions and other words from which nothing could be learned.

In this connection, it remains remarkable that persons otherwise without a trace of clairvoyant powers would momentarily acquire the

ability, when in his vicinity, to feel a presentiment, based on perceptible signs, of certain cases of sickness or death occurring right then, but at a distance. However, none of his children inherited his gift. They were mostly sturdy individuals who enjoyed life and were only concerned with reality.

I shall take this opportunity to mention them gratefully for all the benefits I received from them in my childhood. For example, we were kept busy and amused in numerous ways whenever we visited the second daughter, married to a grocer named Melber, whose lodgings and store were located on the marketplace in the busiest, most congested part of town. Here we could very pleasantly look out of the windows at the bustling crowds, with whom we hesitated to mingle. And even though, at the beginning, what mainly interested us amid all the divers merchandise in the store was only the licorice root and the brown, embossed pastilles made from it, we eventually grew familiar with the multitude of items that flow in and out of such an establishment. This aunt was the most high-spirited of all the brothers and sisters. Whereas my mother, in her younger years, liked to sit neatly dressed and be engaged in some dainty feminine work or in reading a book, her sister would make the rounds of the neighborhood in search of unattended children, whom she would proceed to look after, combing their hair and carrying them around in her arms—as she had done with me for a good while. At times of public festivities, such as coronations, she could not be kept at home. Even as a small child she had reached for the coins thrown out on such occasions, and the story was told how she had once collected a goodly amount of them, which she was happily contemplating in her palm when someone bumped her hand and the hard-won booty was suddenly gone. She was no less eager to tell about how she was standing on a curbstone when the Emperor Charles VII was riding past, and all the people fell silent, but she shouted a loud “Vivat!” into the coach, and caused him to doff his hat and thank her graciously for the saucy compliment.

In her house, the whole atmosphere was busy, gay, and cheerful, and we children were indebted to her for many a happy hour.

Another aunt found herself in quieter circumstances, being married to Pastor Starck of St. Catherine’s Church, but this suited her nature. In harmony with his temperament and position the pastor lived a retiring life and owned a fine library. Here I first became acquainted with Homer, but only in the prose translation of the *Iliad* contained in von Loen’s *New Collection of the Most Remarkable Travel Accounts*, where it is entitled “Homer’s Description of the Conquest of the Trojan Realm” and is embellished with engravings done in French theatrical style. These pictures so corrupted my imagination that for a long time I could visualize the Homeric heroes only under this guise. The stories

themselves pleased me mightily, but I was very critical of the book for not giving any information about the conquest of Troy, since it ended abruptly with the death of Hector. When I expressed this criticism to my uncle he referred me to Virgil, and then my demands were completely satisfied.

It goes without saying that we children, in addition to our other lessons, were given continuous, increasingly advanced instruction in religion. But the ecclesiastical Protestantism handed down to us was no more than a sort of dry moralism; no thought was given to enlivening the presentation, and the doctrine failed to appeal either to heart or mind. For this reason all sorts of separations from the legitimate church ensued. The Separatists, the Pietists, the Moravians, the "Quiet People in the Land," and whatever other names and designations they used to have, came into existence, all with the single purpose of getting closer to the Divinity, especially by way of Christ, than seemed possible under the forms of the public religion.

The boy constantly heard these opinions and sentiments discussed, for both the clergy and the laity were divided into Pros and Contras. Although the dissenters, of whatever degree, were always in the minority, their way of thinking attracted me with its originality, warmth, resoluteness, and independence. All sorts of stories were told about these virtues and their manifestations. Especially well known was the retort of a pious master tinsmith when another guild member tried to embarrass him by asking who his father confessor really might be? Serenely confident of his good cause, the man answered: "I have a very distinguished one; he is no less a personage than the father confessor of King David."

This and the like may well have made an impression on the boy and bidden him to adopt similar sentiments. In any case, the thought occurred to him that he should try to come closer to the great God of nature, the Creator and Preserver of heaven and earth, whose earlier manifestations of wrath he had long since forgotten because of the beauty of the world and the manifold blessings we receive in it. But his way to the goal was very odd.

The boy adhered in general to the first article of the Creed. The God who is in direct contact with nature, who acknowledges and loves it as His work, this seemed to be the real God, who could surely enter into a very close relationship with man, as with everything else, and would be as much concerned about him as about the movement of the stars, the times of day and the seasons, and the plants and animals. Several passages in the Gospels stated this expressly. The boy could not ascribe any form to this Being, and so he sought Him in His works, and in good Old Testament fashion set about erecting an altar to Him. The world was to be symbolized in the objects of nature, and a flame

burning above them was to signify the soul of man longing for its Creator. Now it was a question of selecting the best specimens from our natural history collection, which, as it happened, had just been enlarged. But now the difficulty was how they might be set up in layers. His father, however, had a beautiful red-lacquered and gold-flowered music stand, in the form of a four-sided pyramid with various gradations, which was found very convenient for quartets, but had not been used much recently. The boy appropriated this, and now set up the deputies of nature above one another in steps, so that the effect was rather cheerful and at the same time quite significant. The first worship service was to take place at early sunrise, but the young priest could not decide how to produce a flame that would give off a pleasing odor! Finally he hit upon a way of combining the two, for he had some little scented candles in his possession which would spread the most agreeable fragrance while glimmering, if not flaming. Indeed, such gentle burning and smoking seemed to express what goes on in the soul better than an open flame. The sun had long risen, but neighboring houses screened off the east. Finally it did appear over their roofs; at once a burning glass came into play and ignited the scented candles which stood at the top in a beautiful porcelain bowl. Everything went according to plan, and the devotional service was perfect. The altar remained standing as a special ornament of the room that had been assigned to it in the new house. No one saw anything more in it than a well-displayed collection of natural objects; only the boy knew better, and held his peace. He longed for a repetition of the ritual. Unfortunately, just when the sun came forth most suitably, the porcelain bowl was not at hand. He placed the scented candles directly on the upper surface of the music stand. They were lighted, and the priest's reverence was so great that he did not notice how much damage his sacrifice was causing until it was too late. The candles had burned into the red lacquer and gold flowers in a disgraceful manner and had left black, indelible marks, as if an evil spirit had vanished. The young priest was extremely embarrassed about this. To be sure, he was able to cover up the damage with the biggest and finest specimens, but he had lost heart for further sacrifices, and the accident might almost be viewed as a hint and warning about how dangerous it may be, on the whole, to try to approach God on such paths.

Book Two

Everything I have related up to this point reflects the fortunate and comfortable conditions of a country long at peace. Nowhere, however, can such a lovely time be enjoyed in greater ease than in a town living by its own laws, large enough to house a considerable number of citizens, and so situated as to enrich the latter through commerce. Strangers find it profitable to traffic there, and of course they have to offer gains in order to reap gains. Such a town does not hold sway over a wide territory, but that very fact enables it to secure internal prosperity, because it is not committed by external relations to costly undertakings and cooperative actions.

So it was in Frankfurt during my childhood, where the people enjoyed a succession of happy years. But hardly had I celebrated my seventh birthday on August 28, 1756, when that world-famous war broke out which was to have such a great effect on the next seven years of my life. Frederick II, King of Prussia, invaded Saxony with 60,000 men and without a prior declaration of war. Instead, there followed a manifesto, written, so it was said, by himself, listing the causes that had both moved and entitled him to take such a tremendous step. The world, thus being summoned not only as spectator but as judge of the proceedings, immediately split into two parties, and our family demonstrated this in microcosm.

My grandfather, who as a juror of Frankfurt had borne the baldachin over Francis I at his coronation and had received a heavy gold chain from the empress with a pendant containing her portrait, was, along with some of his daughters and sons-in-law, on the side of the Austrians. My father, who had been designated Imperial Councilor by Charles VII and had heartfelt sympathy for the unhappy fate of this monarch, leaned, with somewhat less than half of the family, toward Prussia. It was not long before our family gatherings, which had taken place regularly every Sunday for several years, were thrown into confusion. The customary disagreements between in-laws now at last took a form that could readily be expressed. They argued, they quarreled, they refused to speak, they lashed out at one another. My grandfather, otherwise a serene, quiet, and easy-going man, grew impatient. The womenfolk tried in vain to dampen the fire, and after a few unpleasant scenes my father was the first to absent himself from the company. Now we could rejoice over the Prussian victories at home, undisturbed. Usually these were announced to us with great jubilation by that one excitable aunt. Every other interest had to bow before this, and we spent the remainder of

the year in constant agitation. The occupation of Dresden, the king's initial moderation, the slow but sure advances, the victory of Lowositz, the capture of the Saxons—all of these were also triumphs for our party. We dismissed or minimized everything that could be argued in favor of the other side, and since the family members who opposed us did likewise, we could not meet each other in the street without starting a quarrel, as in *Romeo and Juliet*.

And so I too entertained Prussian, or more correctly, Fritizian sentiments—for what did we care about Prussia? It was the personality of the great king that affected all spirits. I enjoyed our victories with my father and gleefully copied down the victory songs—even more gleefully the songs satirizing the opposition party, however insipid the verses might be.

As the eldest grandson and godchild I had eaten at my grandparents' house every Sunday since infancy. These had been the most enjoyable hours in the whole week for me. But now not a bite tasted good, because I had to listen to my hero being most dreadfully defamed. Here there was a different wind blowing and a different tone ringing than at home. My affection and respect for my grandparents diminished. I could not mention a word of this in my parents' house; my own feelings and my mother's admonitions kept me from doing so. As a result, I was thrown back upon myself, and just as when I was six, after the Lisbon earthquake, I had begun to doubt the goodness of God, so I now began, for the sake of Frederick II, to doubt the justness of public opinion. My spirit was by nature inclined to reverence, and only a great shock could shake my belief in anything worthy of reverence. Unfortunately, good manners and decent behavior had been recommended to us less for their own sake than for that of other people: "What would people say!" was the oft-repeated phrase, and I had supposed that these people must also be right-thinking individuals who would know how to judge each and every particular. Now, however, I discovered the opposite. I heard the greatest and most obvious merits disparaged and attacked, and the most outstanding deeds, if not denied, at least distorted and belittled. Moreover, this injustice was being done a unique man, the evident superior of all his contemporaries, who was daily proving and demonstrating his abilities. And it was not rabble doing this, but excellent men, as I knew my grandfather and uncles to be. The boy had no conception of what a party was or, indeed, that he himself belonged to one. He just believed all the more stubbornly that he was in the right and that his sentiments ought to be declared correct. After all, he and those who shared his views were ready, on their part, to admit that Maria Theresa was beautiful and had other good qualities, and they did not begrudge Emperor Francis his love of jewels and money, either. But they did think it justifiable to call Count Daun²¹ a dullard sometimes.

In examining the matter more closely, I detect here the germ of my disregard, nay, even scorn, for the public, a feeling that stayed with me through much of my life and was offset only at a late date by insight and culture. Suffice it to say, my discovery of partisan unfairness was very disagreeable and even injurious to me already at that time, since it put a distance between me and persons I loved and esteemed. The deeds and events of war that kept occurring in swift succession left no time to the opposing parties for peace and rest. We took a perverse satisfaction in constantly reviving and intensifying our imaginary troubles and arbitrary disputes, and continued to torment each other until, several years later, the French occupied Frankfurt and brought genuine discomfort into our homes.

Although for most people the important events taking place at a distance were nothing more than a topic for impassioned conversation, others well understood the seriousness of these times and feared that France's participation would mean an extension of the theater of war into our area. We children were made to stay at home more than before, and various means were tried to keep us busy and entertained. To this end our grandmother's last gift, the puppet theater, was set up again, and was now arranged in such a way that the spectators could be seated in my attic room, while the puppeteers and the theater itself, except for the proscenium arch, were situated in the adjoining one. In the beginning I made many friends by granting first one boy and then another the special privilege of being a spectator; but the inherent restlessness of children kept them from sitting patiently for very long. They interfered with the play, and finally we had to make do with a younger audience, which could, if necessary, be held in check by nurses and maids. We had memorized the original main play, the one for which the company of puppets was actually designed, and began by producing it exclusively. But we soon tired of it and changed the wardrobe and settings so that some other plays might be attempted, which, however, proved to be too ambitious for the little stage. Although our presumption led to the decay and eventual destruction of what we were really able to perform, still this childish amusement and pastime in many ways exercised and developed my ability to contrive things and stage them, to use my imagination, and to master certain techniques; and perhaps this could not have been achieved otherwise in so short a time, in so narrow a scope, and at so little expense.

I had learned the use of compasses and ruler at an early age, for I would at once give a practical application to everything we were taught in geometry, and I liked to occupy myself in making things out of pasteboard. I did not stop with geometric forms, or little boxes, and the like, but also devised pretty pavilions equipped with pilasters, staircases, and flat roofs. But I rarely completed any of them.

On the other hand, I showed much greater perseverance in assem-

bling, with the assistance of a servant who was a professional tailor, a wardrobe of costumes for the dramas and tragedies we enjoyed enacting ourselves, having outgrown the puppets. My playmates also got such collections together and considered them just as handsome and serviceable as mine; however, I had not limited myself to one person's needs, but could furnish several members of our little army with all sorts of properties, and so made myself more and more indispensable to our small circle. Not surprisingly, such games bred factions, fights, and blows, and usually ended very badly in quarrels and ill humor. At such times certain playmates regularly supported me, and certain others the opposing side, although there were frequent changes in the makeup of the parties. One boy, however, whom I shall call Pylades, forsook my party only once, after having been baited by the others; but he could scarcely bear to confront me for a minute as an enemy. We tearfully reconciled and stayed loyally together for a long time.

I could greatly please this boy and others who were well disposed toward me by telling them fairy tales. They particularly liked it when these were told in the first person. It was a tremendous delight to them that such marvelous things could happen to me, their playmate, and although they knew all about my comings, goings, and doings, they never questioned me about how I could have found time and place for these adventures. Such happenings required localities, if not in another world, at least in a different region, and yet it was all supposed to have taken place just today or yesterday. Thus they really had to deceive themselves more than I was deceiving them. And if I had not gradually learned, as was my nature, to work up these airy figures and this humbug into artistic presentations, then my ostentatious beginnings might well have led to bad consequences for me.

Close examination of this propensity will show it to be related to the poet's presumptuousness in giving voice imperiously to even the most improbable ideas and in demanding that whatever seems in some way true to him, the inventor, be accepted by everyone as real.

Perhaps what I have presented here only in a general and contemplative way will become more agreeable and vivid with the help of an example or specimen piece. Therefore I shall now append a fairy tale of mine that is still very much alive in my imagination and memory because I had to repeat it so often for my playmates.

The New Paris²² A Boyhood Fairy Tale

Not long ago—it was Whitsunday Eve—I dreamt that I was standing in front of a mirror, trying on the new summer clothes my dear parents had ordered made for me to wear at the festival. The outfit, as you

know, consisted of good leather shoes with big silver buckles, fine cotton stockings, black serge breeches, and a coat of green wool with gold frogs. The vest, of gold material, was cut from the vest my father had worn as a bridegroom. My hair was dressed and powdered, with the curls jutting out from my head like little wings. But I could not get finished because I continually put on the wrong garments and one would fall off my body just as I was about to don another. In the midst of all this annoyance a handsome young man approached me with a most friendly greeting. "Ah, welcome," I said. "I am delighted to see you here." "You know me, then?" he replied with a smile. "Why should I not?" I answered, also smiling. "You are Mercury, and I have seen you portrayed often enough." "That is who I am," said he, "and the gods have sent me to you with an important commission. Do you see these three apples?"—He stretched out his hand and showed me three apples almost too large for it to hold, and they were just as wondrously beautiful as they were big. One was red in color, another yellow, and the third green. They had to be precious stones cut in the form of apples. When I reached out for them he drew back and said, "First, I must tell you that they are not for you. You are to give them to the three handsomest young men in town, and then each of them will find, to match his prize, the very best wife that he could wish to have. Take them, and perform your task well," he said in parting, and placed the apples in my waiting hands. They seemed to have grown still bigger. I held them up to the light and saw that they were quite transparent; but very soon they grew elongated and turned into three very, very lovely women approximately as large as medium-sized dolls, with clothes the color of their respective apples. They glided gently from my fingers, and before I could catch and hold even one of them they were wafting up and far away, so that I could only gaze after them. I stood there petrified with amazement, holding up my hands and looking at my fingers as though something were to be seen on them. Then, suddenly, what should I see but the loveliest girl imaginable dancing around on my fingertips, smaller than the others, but certainly equally pretty and lively. And since instead of flying away she tarried, dancing back and forth from one fingertip to the other, I was able to watch her for a while in amazement. She pleased me so much that I tried to catch her, thinking myself quick enough to do so. But at that very moment I felt a blow on my head and fell down unconscious. I did not come to myself again until it was time to dress and go to church.

During the service I kept rehearsing these events in my mind; I did the same at my grandparents' table, where I ate my noon meal. In the afternoon I tried to visit a few friends, not only because I owed them a visit, but because I wanted to show off my new clothes, with my hat under my arm and a sword at my side. I found no one at home, and

since I was told they had gone to the gardens, I decided to follow them and spend a pleasant evening. My path led between the inner and outer fortifications, and I came to the part justly called the "evil wall," for never does one feel quite at ease there. I walked slowly, thinking of my little goddesses and especially of the little nymph. Sometimes I held my finger in the air in the hope she might deign to balance herself on it again. As I walked on, lost in these thoughts, I noticed on my left a little gate in the wall that I did not remember having seen before. It looked low, but actually its arch was high enough to admit the tallest man. Both arch and walls had been most delicately chiseled by the stone mason and sculptor, but the door itself seemed still more remarkable to me. Its ancient brown wood was very simply decorated and was bound by broad bands of bronze worked both in intaglio and relief. The foliage depicted in these bands had very natural-looking birds perched in it and filled me with admiration. But, strangest of all, neither a keyhole, nor a latch, nor a knocker was to be seen, so that I was forced to the conclusion that this door could only be opened from the inside. I was not mistaken, for, as I approached to touch the decorations, it opened from within and a man appeared, dressed in a long, wide, odd-looking garment. His chin was framed by a venerable beard, as though by a cloud, so that I was inclined to take him for a Jew. As though he had guessed my thoughts, he made the sign of the Holy Cross, by which I was given to understand that he was a good Catholic Christian.—"Young sir, how come you hither, and what are you doing here?" he asked with a friendly mien and tone. "I am admiring the work on this gate," I answered, "for I have never seen its like, except perhaps in bits and pieces in the collections of art lovers."—"I am pleased," he said, "that you like such work. The inside of the gate is much more beautiful still. Step in, if you care to." The situation looked slightly dubious to me. The gatekeeper's strange clothing, the remoteness of the spot, and something indefinable about the whole atmosphere made me apprehensive. Therefore I delayed under the pretext of wanting to look at the outer side a bit longer, and I took this opportunity to steal a glance into the garden—for the gate had opened into a garden. Directly behind the gate I saw a large shady area: old linden trees, planted at regular distances from each other, covered it completely with their thickly interlaced branches, under which even the most numerous company could have found relief from the sun's heat. Before I knew it, I had put a foot on the threshold, and the old man enticed me into taking another step and yet another. I really did not resist him, for I had always heard that when a prince or a sultan is in such a situation he must never ask whether danger is lurking. After all, I had a sword at my side, and would I not be able to deal with the old man if he should prove hostile? So I stepped inside quite confidently. The gatekeeper

closed the door with such a gentle click that I was scarcely aware of it. Then he showed me the work on the reverse side, which really was much more artistic, and he explained it to me with an air of great benevolence. Completely reassured by this, I let myself be led farther along the wall which encircled the leafy area, and I found much to admire in this wall. It had niches, artfully decorated with shells, coral, and specimens of metals, that held Tritons spewing forth water copiously from their mouths into marble basins; between these had been hung bird cages, as well as others in which squirrels, guinea pigs, and similar pretty creatures hopped and scampered about. The birds called and sang to us as we walked along; the starlings in particular chattered the most nonsensical things. One kept calling, "Paris, Paris," and another, "Narcissus, Narcissus," as plainly as if they had been school-boys. As the birds called, the old man seemed to become graver and graver. I pretended not to notice, and actually I had little time to pay attention to him, because I had discovered that we were walking in a circle. This shady place was in reality nothing more than a large ring around another place of much greater significance. Eventually we arrived back at the gate, and the old man made as if to let me out. But my eyes remained fixed on a golden fence which apparently enclosed the center of this wonderful garden. There had been plenty of opportunity for me to observe it during our walk, even though the old man had always kept me close to the wall and, consequently, at some distance from the center. As he now headed for the gate, I said to him with a bow: "You have been so extremely accommodating that I should like to venture one more request before taking my leave. Might I not have a closer look at that golden fence which seems to describe a wide circle around the interior of the garden?"—"Indeed you may," he replied, "but only if you submit to several conditions."—"What are they?" I made haste to ask. "You will have to leave your hat and sword behind, and may not let go of my hand while I accompany you." "Right willingly!" I answered, depositing my hat and sword on the nearest stone bench. At once he grasped my left hand in his right one, held it firmly, and with some force led me straight forward. When we reached the fence, my curiosity changed to astonishment: I had never seen anything like it! Ranged on a high marble pediment stood countless numbers of pikes and halberds whose strangely decorated points were linked to form a complete circle. I peered through the interspaces and saw a gently flowing stream immediately behind them, bordered on both sides in marble. A large number of gold and silver fishes were to be seen moving in its clear depths, now slowly, now swiftly, now singly, now in a school. I wanted to look beyond this canal and discover what the heart of the garden contained, but to my great annoyance I found that there was an identical fence on the other side, so artfully con-

structed that for every interspace on this side there was a corresponding pike or halberd on the other. That arrangement, in addition to the decorations, made looking through impossible, however one placed oneself. Moreover, the old man continued to hold me fast, which kept me from moving freely. Meanwhile, my curiosity about everything I had seen was increasing, and I made bold to ask the old man whether one could not cross over to that side, too.—“Why not?” he answered. “But with further conditions.” When I inquired about these, he gave me to understand that I would have to change my clothes. I was agreeable to that, and he led me back to a clean little room within the wall, where various outfits of Oriental-looking clothes were hanging. I changed quickly, and he pulled my hair into a many-colored net, after having first, to my dismay, energetically brushed out all the powder. Now I looked into a large mirror and found that I liked myself better in the masquerade costume than in my stiff Sunday suit. I practiced a few gestures and leaps, as I had seen dancers do in the theater at the fair. In so doing, I chanced to see in the mirror the reflection of a niche in back of me. From its white base three small green cords hung down, each one knotted in a way that I could not make out clearly from this distance. I therefore turned around with some haste to ask the old man about the niche and those cords. Very accommodatingly he took one down and showed it to me. It was a green silken strand²³ of moderate thickness, with both ends drawn through two holes bored in a piece of green leather, so that it looked very much like a device one could put to a not very pleasant use! It all seemed rather suspicious to me, and I asked the old man for an explanation. He answered me in a calm and kindly way: this was meant for those who abused the trust placed in them here. He hung the cord back in its place and immediately bade me follow him. This time he did not take hold of me and I could walk next to him in freedom.

Now my curiosity was mainly directed to the whereabouts of the door and bridge that would get me through the fence and across the canal. Up to this point I had not been able to discover them anywhere. Therefore I fixed my gaze very intently on the fence as we hurried toward it. But in the next moment it disappeared from my view, for unexpectedly the lances, spears, halberds, and partisans began to rattle and shake, and this strange motion did not end until all their points were lowered in two opposing ranks, just as if two armies of old, equipped with pikes, were set to attack each other. The confusion was almost too much for the eye, and the clatter for the ear, yet it made for an incredible sight when they lay completely flat over the curving canal to form the most splendid bridge, and beyond them the most colorful garden stretched out before my view. It consisted of intertwining flower beds which formed a labyrinth of ornament when con-

templated as a whole: all were bordered with a low-growing, green, and woolly plant that was unfamiliar to me. Each bed had flowers of a different color, and they also were all low-growing, so that the intended design could readily be discerned. This exquisite sight, which I could enjoy in full sunlight, totally captivated my eyes, but I hardly knew where to step, for the winding paths were very neatly covered with blue sand, which seemed to create a darker kind of sky, or a sky reflected in the water, on the earth. So I walked next to my guide for a while with my eyes to the ground, until at last I perceived that in the middle of this ring of flower beds stood a great clump of cypresses or poplar-like trees impossible to see through because their lower branches were so close to the earth they seemed to be growing out of it. Without exactly forcing me onto the nearest path, my guide nevertheless led me directly towards that center, and when I stepped into the circle of high trees, how surprised I was to see before me the columned portico of an exquisite summer house, which appeared to have similar entrances and prospects on all its other sides. However, what enraptured me even more than this model of fine architecture was the heavenly music that emanated from the building. At first I thought I was hearing a lute, then a harp, then a zither, and then some tinkling sound not characteristic of any of these instruments. The gate toward which we had walked opened when the old man lightly touched it, and to my astonishment the gatekeeper who emerged looked exactly like the dainty girl who, in my dream, had danced on my fingers. She greeted me as an acquaintance and bade me enter. The old man stayed back, and I walked with her through a short, arched, and beautifully decorated passageway into the middle room, whose splendid height, like that of a cathedral, claimed my attention as I entered, and filled me with amazement. Yet my eye could not tarry there long, because it was lured downwards by a still more charming spectacle. On a carpet directly under the middle of the cupola sat three ladies, forming a triangle, and they were dressed in three different colors, one in red, another in yellow, and the third in green. Their chairs were gilded, and the carpet looked like a veritable flower bed. In their arms rested the three instruments I had been able to identify when outside, for they were disturbed by my arrival and had stopped playing them. "You are welcome!" said the middle one, namely she who sat facing the door, dressed in red and holding the harp. "Be seated next to Alerte, and listen, if you are a lover of music." Now I first became aware that a fairly long bench, with a mandolin lying on it, was placed crosswise in front of and below them. The amiable girl picked up this instrument, sat down, and drew me to her side. I also gazed at the second lady, who was at my right: she wore the yellow dress and had a zither in her hand. The harpist was rather tall and had fairly large features, as well as something majestic in her de-

meanor. But the zither player was a light, graceful, cheerful personage. She was a slender blonde, whereas the harpist had a crown of dark hair. All the variety and harmony of their music, however, could not deter me from also looking at the third beauty, in her green dress, whose lute playing both touched and intrigued me. It was she who seemed to pay me most heed and to direct her playing at me, yet I did not know what to make of her, for, to judge from her changes of expression and ways of playing, she seemed sometimes tender, then wayward; sometimes sincere, then capricious. She seemed to want first to move me, then to tease me. But try as she might, she had little success, for I soon became completely fascinated by my little neighbor, with whom I was sitting elbow to elbow. Recognizing in these three ladies, as I did, the sylphs of my dream and the colors of the apples, I was well aware that it would be pointless to try to hold them fast. Actually, it was the charming little one I felt most like seizing hold of, but I remembered all too well the blow she had given me in my dream. Up to this point she had not struck a tone from her mandolin, but when her mistresses stopped playing, they ordered her to divert them with some merry tunes. Hardly had she tinkled out a few dance melodies in a very infectious manner, when she leaped into the air, and I did the same. She played and danced, and I was so carried away that I began to do the same steps, and we performed a sort of little ballet, which apparently pleased the ladies, for as soon as we finished they commanded the little one to provide me with some refreshments while we were waiting for the evening meal. As for me, I had forgotten that there was anything in the world beyond this paradise! Alerte led me back at once through the passageway by which I had entered. At the side she had two well-furnished rooms. In the one she lived in she served me oranges, figs, peaches, and grapes, and with great appetite I ate these fruits which were either foreign or out of season. There were sweets in abundance, and she also filled a cut crystal goblet with foaming wine, but I had refreshed myself sufficiently with the fruit and needed nothing to drink.—“Now we are going to play,” said she, conducting me into the second room. It looked like a Christmas fair in there, except that such fine and costly articles have never been seen in an ordinary booth. There were all kinds of dolls, doll clothes, and doll furniture for kitchens, sitting rooms, and shops, and there were individual toys in great numbers. She led me around to all the glass cabinets in which these artfully made objects were stored, but she quickly closed the first ones again and said, “That is nothing for you, of course. Here, however,” she continued, “we could have building blocks for walls and towers, houses, palaces, and churches, and could construct a big town. But that does not amuse *me*! Let us select something else which will please both you and me equally.” Thereupon she brought out two cases in which I saw

little soldiers packed in layers. I had to admit I had never seen anything so fine. She gave me no time to examine them individually but took one case under her arm, while I picked up the other. "We shall go to the golden bridge," said she, "for that is the best place to play with soldiers: the spears indicate the direction in which the armies are to be set up against each other." We soon had reached that swaying golden floor. I could hear the water ripple and the fish splash beneath me while I knelt and set up my battle lines. As I now saw, it was cavalry on both sides. The girl gloried in having the queen of the Amazons to lead her female army, while I found myself in possession of Achilles and a very stately troop of Greek cavalry. The armies now stood facing each other, and nothing could have looked more beautiful. You see, they were not flat leaden horsemen like ours; on the contrary, man and mount alike had rounded bodily contours and were most exquisitely worked. It was hard to understand how they kept their balance, for they had no little footboards, but stood on their own legs.

After we had each contemplated our troops with great self-satisfaction, she announced her attack. We had also discovered ordnance in our cases, consisting of boxes full of little polished agate pellets. We were to fight against each other with these at an agreed-upon distance, and it was expressly stipulated that we were not to throw with any greater force than was needed just to knock the figures over, for they were not to be damaged. The cannonading back and forth now began, and at first brought us mutual satisfaction. But when my fair opponent noticed that I was in fact aiming better than she and might win the final victory (which depended on having the most figures left standing), she stepped closer, and then her girlish throwing had the desired results. She laid a large number of my best troops low, and the more I protested the more vigorously she threw. I eventually grew irritated and declared I would do the same. But not only did I step nearer, in my bad humor I also threw much harder, and before long a few of her little female centaurs were smashed to pieces. In her fervor, she did not immediately notice this, but I stood petrified when the little broken figures joined themselves together again—Amazon and horse once more a whole—and simultaneously came to life, galloped across the golden bridge and under the linden trees, careened back and forth, and finally disappeared, I know not how, in the direction of the wall. When my fair opponent perceived this, she burst out in loud weeping and wailing and shouted that I had caused her an irreparable loss, one much greater than could be put into words. But I was angry enough to delight in doing something to hurt her, and I threw my few remaining pellets among her troops with blind force. Unfortunately, they struck the queen, who heretofore had been left out of our game. She fell to pieces, and her nearest adjutants were also shattered; but they quickly mended themselves, took

to flight like the first ones, galloped very merrily around the lindens, and disappeared in the direction of the wall.

My opponent scolded and railed at me. I, however, being in full swing, bent down to pick up a few pellets rolling about on the golden spears. It was my angry intention to annihilate her whole army; but she suddenly jumped at me and gave me such a box on the ear that my head rang. I had always heard it said that a girl's slap must be repaid with a rough kiss; therefore I took her by the ears and kissed her repeatedly. She, however, uttered such a piercing scream that I myself was startled and let her go, and this was fortunate, for in that very moment I lost my bearings: The floor beneath me began to quiver and rattle, and I noted hastily that the fences were in motion again, but I did not have time to reflect on this, nor could I get my footing in order to flee. I thought I was going to be impaled at any moment, for the partisans and lances, as they rose upright, were already slitting my clothes. In brief, I lost my bearings, my senses failed, and when I recovered from my unconsciousness and fright I found myself at the foot of a linden tree, having been thrown against it by the swiftly rising fence. My anger awoke along with my senses, and it grew still more violent when I heard the mocking words and laughter of my opponent, who had landed over on the other side, presumably more gently than I. So I jumped to my feet, and, seeing my little army and its leader Achilles lying strewn around me just where it had been catapulted by the rising fence, I seized the hero first and threw him against a tree. His quick restoration and flight pleased me doubly, because now some malice had been added to my joy in the prettiest sight in the world. I was about to throw all the rest of the Greeks after him, when hissing jets of water suddenly began to spray on me from all sides, from stones and walls, from ground and branches, pelting crosswise against me whichever way I turned. In a short time my light garments were thoroughly soaked, and since they were already torn in many places, I did not hesitate to pull them off entirely. First I cast off the slippers, and so it went, one covering after the other. Since it was a warm day I began to find it quite pleasant to have this shower bath play over me. There I was, quite naked, walking solemnly along between these welcome waters and thinking I would enjoy them for some time. My anger was cooling, and I wished with all my heart for a reconciliation with my little opponent. But in a trice the water was shut off, and now I stood there, dripping, on the soaking wet ground. Unexpectedly, the old man stepped in front of me, a by no means welcome presence. If I could not hide, at least I would have liked to cover myself. My embarrassment and chilliness, and my efforts to find some sort of covering, made me cut a most pitiful figure. The old man chose that moment to reprimand me severely. "What would hinder me," he shouted, "from taking one of the green cords and ap-

plying it, if not to your neck, at any rate to your back?" Taking this threat very ill, I shouted in return, "Be careful about words like that, or even thoughts like that, for otherwise you and your mistresses are ruined!"—"And who are you," he asked defiantly, "that you may talk thus?"—"A favorite of the gods," I said, "on whom it depends whether those ladies find worthy husbands and lead happy lives, or languish and grow old in their enchanted cloister."—The old man took a few steps backward. "Who has revealed that to you?" he asked in doubt and astonishment.—"Three apples," I said, "three jewels."—"And what do you demand as a reward?" he shouted. "First of all," I replied, "the little creature who brought me to this sorry state." The old man threw himself down before me, heedless of the damp and muddy earth; then he stood up, without having gotten wet, took me amicably by the hand, quickly dressed me again, and soon I was as spruced up in my Sunday best, with my hair curled, as I had been before. The gatekeeper did not utter another word, but before he let me out over the threshold he stopped and pointed out to me several objects in the wall there across the way, at the same time pointing back at the little portal. I understood him well: he simply wanted to impress these objects on my memory, so that I would be the more certain to find the little door again, which now unexpectedly closed behind me. I took note exactly of what stood opposite me: The branches of several ancient walnut trees extended over a high wall, partly covering the ledge with their tips. The branches reached to a stone tablet, whose decorated border was distinguishable, but not its inscription. This rested upon the stone corbel of a niche from which an artfully constructed fountain poured down water from bowl to bowl into a large basin that formed, as it were, a small pond and merged with the ground. Fountain, inscription, walnut trees, all stood vertically one above the other. I would like to paint it as I saw it.

One can well imagine how I spent that evening and many a following day, and how often I reviewed all those adventures, which I could hardly believe had happened. As soon as possible, I returned to the "evil wall," in order to refresh my memory, at least, about those landmarks and to look at the exquisite little portal. But, to my utmost astonishment, I found everything changed. True, some walnut trees extended over the wall, but they were not standing quite next to each other. A tablet was sunk into the wall, but much to the right of the trees, and, although its inscription was legible, it was without decoration. There was a niche with a fountain far over to the left, but it did not in the least resemble the one I had seen, so that I am tempted to think the second adventure was also only a dream, just like the first one, for there is no trace whatever of the little portal. My only consolation is that I have noticed how those three objects seem to be changing their locations. My repeated visits to that area lead me to

think that the walnut trees are moving somewhat more closely together, and that the tablet and fountain are also nearer to each other. Probably, when all those things have joined together, the portal will also be visible, and I shall do my best to resume the adventure. Whether I shall be able to tell you what occurs then, or whether this will be expressly forbidden me, I am not in a position to say.

This fairy tale received great applause, and my playmates tried with passionate fervor to persuade themselves of its truth. One by one, without confiding in me or the others, they visited the spot I had indicated and found the walnut trees, the tablet, and the fountain, but all still separated—as they eventually confessed, for children find it hard to keep a secret. But now the controversy really began. The first boy assured us that the objects had not budged from the spot and always maintained the same distance from each other. The second asserted that they had moved, but farther apart. The third agreed with the second about the moving, but it seemed to him that the walnut trees, tablet, and fountain were coming closer together. The fourth claimed to have seen something even more remarkable: he said the walnut trees were in the middle, while the tablet and the fountain stood just opposite to where I had indicated. They were also at variance about the trace of the little portal. And so they furnished me with an early example of how people can have and hold to the most contradictory views on a question that is actually quite simple and easily examined. When I steadfastly refused to continue my fairy tale, they kept asking to hear its first part again. I took care not to change the particulars very much, and by dint of such uniformity in narration I succeeded in making my listeners accept this fable as truth.

In other respects I was disinclined to lying and pretense, and on the whole was not at all frivolous. On the contrary, the inward seriousness with which I had viewed the world and myself from early on was even visible on the outside, and I was often reproached, in a friendly or a mocking way, for presuming to show a certain dignity. Although I did not lack good, carefully chosen friends, they and I were always in the minority against boys who delighted in roughly and mischievously attacking us. Indeed, the latter gave us many a rude awakening from the complacent fairy tale dreams we only too easily lost ourselves in, with me inventing and my playmates following my lead. Thus we were once again reminded that, instead of yielding to fantasy's soft pleasures, we had good cause to harden ourselves against inevitable evils, so that we might be able either to bear or resist them.

Among the Stoic exercises I trained myself in, as seriously as is possible for a boy, was the endurance of physical pain. Our teachers used to keep us under control very harshly and ineptly with thumps and

blows to which we simply had to inure ourselves because any resistance or counteraction was strictly prohibited. Much childish play involves contests in endurance, as for example, when boys trade blows with two fingers or the whole hand until those members get numb; or when one bears more or less impassively the blows that are forfeits in certain games; or when in scuffling and wrestling one is not deterred by the pinches of a half-vanquished opponent; or when one stifles a pain inflicted teasingly, or even acts indifferent to the constant tickling and tweaking that youngsters plague each other with. One gains a great advantage from this, and is not easily deprived of it by others.

Since I, however, practically flaunted my defiance of pain, the other children grew more importunate, and as naughty cruelty knows no bounds, it was able to drive me beyond my bounds as well. I shall relate one incident among many: The teacher failed to arrive for one of our lessons. As long as all of us children were together, we amused ourselves quite properly. But when the ones who liked me left, having tired of waiting, and I stayed behind with three boys who did not like me, these three plotted to torment and shame me, and drive me away. They left the room for a moment and returned holding switches hurriedly cut from a broom. I saw what they were up to, but because I believed the end of the hour was near, I suddenly resolved not to defend myself until the bell rang. Therefore they began to beat me very cruelly and mercilessly on the legs and calves. While I did not flinch, I soon felt that I had miscalculated, and that such pain very much lengthens the minutes. My rage grew as I suffered, and at the first stroke of the hour I grabbed the least suspecting one by his pigtail, pulled him off his feet, and pressed my knee into his back. As for the second one, a younger and weaker boy who was attacking me from behind, I drew his head under my arm, squeezed him against my side, and nearly choked him. Now only one remained; he was not the weakest of them, and I had nothing else to defend myself with except my left hand. But I caught hold of his clothing, and by a deft maneuver of mine, as well as an overhasty one of his, I brought him down and pushed his face against the floor. Of course, they did their share of biting, scratching, and kicking, but my mind and limbs were concentrated on revenge. Having them at a disadvantage, I repeatedly knocked their heads together. At last they raised an ear-splitting cry for help, and soon we saw ourselves surrounded by all the people in the house. The switches that were all strewn about, and my abused legs, as soon as I stripped down my stockings, gave ready testimony in my favor. They alone were punished, while I was permitted to leave. But I first announced that in future, if given the least offence, I would scratch out one or the other's eyes and tear off his ears, or maybe even choke him to death.

Even though, as is usually the case with childish affairs, I soon dis-

missed this incident from my mind and actually laughed about it, nevertheless, on account of it, our group lessons grew less frequent and finally ceased altogether. As a result, I was again, as before, confined to my own home, where I found an ever more agreeable companion in my sister Cornelia, who was only a year younger than I.

Yet I shall not turn from this subject without relating a few more stories about my various unpleasant encounters with playmates. Such disclosures regarding manners and morals are instructive because a person learns from them how others have fared in life and what he too may expect. Then, whatever happens to him, he should consider it his lot as a human being and not look on himself as an exceptionally lucky or unlucky individual. Perhaps such knowledge is not of much use for avoiding evils, but it serves well to teach us how to find our bearings under such conditions, to endure them, nay, to overcome them.

This is the right place for another general observation, namely, that children growing up in genteel families are faced with a great contradiction. I mean, they are instructed and admonished by parents and teachers to behave discreetly, sensibly, reasonably, to do no one an injury either out of mischief or high spirits, and to suppress all malicious impulses that might be developing in them. But simultaneously, while they are occupied with such exercises, they are obliged to put up with the very same things from others that they have been rebuked for and sternly prohibited from doing. Accordingly, the poor creatures are caught in a miserable vise between raw nature and civilization, and, after having restrained themselves for a while, they either become spiteful or violently hot-tempered, as their individual characters may dictate.

Force can usually be repelled by force, but a kindly child, one inclined to love and sympathy, is poorly prepared to defend himself against derision and ill will. While I was able to counter my playfellows' physical attacks well enough, I was no match for their jibes and disparaging remarks, because one loses as soon as one answers. Therefore I also fought back physically against attacks of this kind, if I was stung to anger; or else they awoke strange reflections in me that were not without some consequences. Those malevolent children begrudged me, among other advantages, my enjoyment of the benefits accruing to the family from my grandfather's position as chief magistrate. And indeed, the fact that he stood out as the first among his peers had no small effect on his relatives. When I once, after the conclusion of the Pipers' Court, seemed a little puffed up about seeing Grandfather in the midst of the jurors' council, enthroned, as it were, one step higher than the others and directly under the portrait of the emperor, one of the boys sneeringly said that I, like a peacock to its feet, should look to my paternal grandfather, who had been innkeeper at the Willow Yard and surely had no

claim to thrones and crowns. I replied that I was by no means ashamed of this: the splendid and uplifting thing about our native town was precisely that all its inhabitants might consider themselves equals and each of them could use his occupation to find honor and advancement in his own way. I said I was only sorry that the good man had died so long ago, for I had frequently wished that I too could have known him personally. Many times I had gazed at his picture and had even visited his grave where I was, at any rate, happy to read the inscription on the simple monument to his bygone existence, to which I owed my own. Another unfriendly boy, the most spiteful one of all, took the first one aside and whispered something in his ear, while they both kept looking at me mockingly. That was enough to raise my bile, and I dared them to speak out loud.—“Well, if you must know, it is nothing more than this,” said the first one. “This boy says, if you were looking for your grandfather, you would have a long walk.”—I now threatened more vehemently that they had better explain themselves clearly. Then they came out with a rumor they had probably heard while eavesdropping on their parents, to the effect that my father was the son of a gentleman of rank who had succeeded easily enough in persuading a docile citizen to act as the ostensible father. They had the effrontery to present all manner of proof for their allegation: for example, that our fortune came from our grandmother alone, and that Grandfather’s collateral relatives, who lived in Friedberg and elsewhere, were also without means, and other such arguments, whose weight was only derived from malice. I listened more patiently than they had expected, and they were already poised to flee, should I make a move to grab their hair. I answered with great composure that this would be all right with me too for life was such a fine thing that it made no difference to whom one owed it. In the final analysis, it came from God, before whom we were all equal. Seeing that they were accomplishing nothing, they let the matter rest for the time being. We continued to play together, which is a time-tested method of reconciliation among children.

Nevertheless, their malicious words had infected me with a kind of moral illness, which subtly spread. I was not at all displeased with the idea of being the grandson of some gentleman of rank, even if not in the most legitimate way. I was on the scent of this trail, my imagination was stimulated, and my intelligence was challenged. I began to dig further into what those boys had asserted, and found or invented new reasons to accept it as probable. I had heard little about my grandfather. In the old house, his picture had hung in a reception room by that of my grandmother; after the completion of the new one, both pictures were kept in an upstairs room. My grandmother, who was of the same age as her husband, must have been a very beautiful woman. I also remembered having seen in her room the miniature portrait of a hand-

some gentleman wearing the insignia of rank, but this had disappeared along with many other small items during the upheaval of reconstruction. Such matters as these, and many others besides, I assembled in my childish mind, thus anticipating a talent peculiar to modern poets, namely their ability to capture the sympathetic interest of the whole cultivated world by making fantastic combinations of the significant situations in human life.

Since I did not dare to confide this matter to anyone, or even to make any veiled inquiries, I had to work on it secretly, hoping possibly to find out more. Of course, I had heard it stated quite positively that sons customarily bear a close resemblance to their fathers or grandfathers. Several of our friends, particularly our family friend Councilor Schneider, had official connections with all the neighboring lords and princes, not a few of whom, whether sovereigns or younger sons, had their estates on the Rhine and the Main, and in the region between; and sometimes, as a special mark of favor, they would honor their loyal agents with the gift of their portraits. Although I had seen these pictures on the wall from my infancy, I examined them now with redoubled attention, searching to discover a similarity to my father or even myself; but I succeeded so often that I could not attach any certainty to my findings. First it was this one's eyes, then that one's nose which seemed to indicate some relationship, and so these distinguishing traits led me hither and yon very deceptively. And although in the end I was obliged to view this subject as a thoroughly idle fairy tale, yet its impression stayed with me. From time to time, secretly, I could not help scrutinizing and examining the whole group of lords, whose likenesses had remained very clear in my imagination. How true it is that whatever bolsters a person's inner conceit and flatters his secret vanity becomes so desirable that he no longer cares whether it brings him, in other respects, honor or disgrace.

But instead of interjecting serious or censorious observations here, I prefer to turn my gaze away from those lovely times. For who is able to describe the richness of childhood adequately? We cannot help but feel pleasure, nay, admiration, as we look at these little creatures toddling about before us, for they show great promise—usually more than they fulfill, and here it seems as if nature, who plays other roguish tricks, has gone out of her way to make fools of us. She equips children for their entry into the world with organs adapted to their immediate creaturely needs, and they use them artlessly, unpretentiously, always achieving the most direct goals in the most dexterous manner. The child, viewed in itself and together with its peers, and within relationships commensurate to its own abilities, seems to be so sensible and rational that nothing superior could be imagined, and is also so much at ease, so serene, and so adroit that any further cultural development

would seem to be superfluous. If children continued to grow in line with what they first indicate, we would have nothing but geniuses. But growth implies more than mere expansion: the various organic systems constituting the individual human being originate in one another, follow one another, transform themselves into each other, displace one another, and even consume one another, so that in time scarcely a trace remains of some abilities and some manifestations of strength. While a person's potentialities, overall, are bent in a definite direction, even the greatest, most experienced expert would find it difficult to predict reliably what that might be. But with hindsight one can recognize the features quite well that were pointing toward future developments.

Therefore I by no means intend to complete the story of my childhood in these first books. Instead, many a thread winding unobtrusively through the early years will be taken up again later and followed farther. Here, however, I must comment on how strongly the events of war were beginning, little by little, to influence our attitudes and way of life.

The peaceful citizen stands in a strange relationship to great world events. He is worried and upset by them even at a distance, and although not directly affected, he cannot refrain from expressing his opinions and sympathies. Soon he takes one side or the other, as may be dictated by his character or external circumstances. When great destinies and significant changes of fortune move closer, then in addition to many external discomforts he still has that inward uneasiness, which for the most part doubles and intensifies the evil and spoils anything good that might possibly be left. Then he really suffers from friends and foes, often more from the former than the latter, and he does not know how either his sympathies or his best interests are to be protected and preserved.

Although we still spent the year 1757 in perfect civil peace, it was fraught with great mental anxiety. It was perhaps the most eventful year of all. Victories, great deeds, misfortunes, and the recouping of losses came in succession, swallowed one another up, and seemed to cancel each other out. But always the figure, the name, and the fame of Frederick quickly soared aloft again. His admirers' enthusiasm grew ever greater and more intense, the hatred among his enemies ever bitterer, and these divergent opinions, which even divided families, contributed in no small measure to isolate our townspeople from each other still more, as separate as they were already in many ways. In a town like Frankfurt, where three religions divide the inhabitants into three unequal groups, and where only a few men even in the leading group can attain a position in government, naturally many a wealthy and educated man will have to retire into himself and create an individual, secluded existence out of his studies and avocations. Both now and

later I shall be obliged to discuss men of this type, if I am to sketch the characteristics of a Frankfurt burgher of that time.

Upon returning from his travels, my father seized upon what was for him the quite characteristic thought of training himself for the municipal service by taking and administering one of the subaltern offices, without emolument, provided it were given him without the balloting. Characteristically and in keeping with his own self-image, and with confidence in his good will, he believed that he deserved such preferential treatment, although it was neither legal nor traditional. So when his proposal was rejected, he became angry and sullen, and swore never to accept any position. To make this impossible he procured himself the title of Imperial Councilor, the same one borne as a special distinction by the chief magistrate and the jurors. Thus he made himself equal with the topmost officials and could no longer start from the bottom. With the same motive in mind he wooed the chief magistrate's eldest daughter, which was another way of barring himself from the council. Now he was numbered among the recluses, who never constitute a society of their own. They are as isolated from each other as from the rest of the community, all the more so since their odd characters acquire even more rugged contours in their seclusion. On his travels and in the wide open world that he had seen, my father apparently got some notion of a more elegant and liberal life style than was perhaps common among his fellow townsfolk. However, he had some predecessors and counterparts in this.

The name von Uffenbach is well known. A Juror von Uffenbach was alive then and a man of good repute. He had been to Italy, where he had devoted himself to music, and he had a pleasant tenor voice. Since he had brought back a fine collection of scores, concerts and oratorios were performed at his house. Because he sang in these himself and befriended musicians, it was felt that he lowered his dignity a bit, and both his invited guests and the other townspeople permitted themselves many a joke at his expense.

I further remember a Baron von Häckel, a wealthy nobleman with a wife but no children, whose beautiful house in Antonius Lane was equipped with all the requisites for elegant living. He also owned good paintings, copperplate engravings, antiques, and many other things that collectors and connoisseurs amass. From time to time he would invite prominent townspeople to his home for the midday meal, and he was a charitable man in his own prudent way, clothing the poor in his house. But he would keep their old rags and give them their weekly alms only on condition that they present themselves each time, cleanly and decently, in those donated clothes. I have just a dim recollection of him as being a friendly, handsome man; but I do remember very clearly an auction he once held. I attended it from start to finish, and, partly at

my father's order, but also partly on my own initiative, I bought some things that are still to be found in my collections.

Earlier, and almost before my time, Johann Michael von Loen²⁴ became the talk of the literary world, and of Frankfurt as well. Although not a native of the town, he had settled there and married my Grandmother Textor's sister, née Lindheimer. He was well acquainted with the milieus of both court and state, and delighted in the renewal of his patent of nobility; and he made a name for himself by courageously intervening in various conflicts that arose in church and state. He wrote *The Count of Rivera*, a didactic novel whose content is evident from the subtitle: *Or the Honest Man at Court*. This work was well received because it called for morality at court, which is otherwise only the domain of shrewdness, and so his efforts brought him applause and prestige. However, a second work proved to be all the more dangerous for him. He wrote *The Only True Religion*, a book whose purpose was to promote tolerance, especially between Lutherans and Calvinists. On this score he got into a dispute with the theologians, and especially Dr. Brenner²⁵ in Giessen wrote against him. Von Loen replied. The dispute grew vehement and personal, and the resulting unpleasantness motivated the author to accept the position of district president at Lingen offered him by Frederick II, who believed he saw in von Loen an enlightened and unprejudiced man, not averse to those innovations which had already made such headway in France. His former townsmen, whom he had been loath to leave, claimed that he was not happy in Lingen, nay, could not possibly be happy there, because a tiny place like Lingen could never measure up to Frankfurt. My father also had doubts about the president's well-being. He averred that our good uncle should never have become involved with the king, because it was simply dangerous to approach him, however exceptional a ruler he might be otherwise. For, after all, we had seen the famous Voltaire disgracefully arrested in Frankfurt by order of the Prussian Resident, Freitag, even though he had previously enjoyed such high favor and was considered the king's tutor in French poetry. In support of his views, my father had a ready supply of observations and examples warning us against courts and the service of princes, which was in any case an alien concept to a native of Frankfurt.

Doctor Orth,²⁶ though an excellent man, will only be mentioned here in passing, because it is not my intention at present to erect a monument to the meritorious citizens of Frankfurt, but rather to name the ones whose reputation or personality had some influence on me in my early years. Doctor Orth was a wealthy man, but also one of those who never participated in the government, even though his knowledge and understanding would surely have entitled him to do so. The study of German antiquities, particularly those of Frankfurt, owes him a great deal,

for he edited the commentary to the so-called *Frankfurt Reformation*, a work containing the collected statutes of the imperial city. In my adolescent years I studied the historical chapters in it very assiduously.

Von Ochsenstein, the eldest of those three brothers I referred to earlier as our neighbors, went unnoticed during his lifetime because of his reclusive ways, but he made up for this when he died, by leaving orders that he should be carried to his grave in the morning by workmen, very quietly, with no accompaniment and procession. That is what happened, and it caused a great sensation in a town accustomed to splendid funerals. All those who traditionally profited from such occasions attacked the innovation. But the honest patrician found imitators among people of all classes, and despite the fact that such funerals were mockingly dubbed "oxen corteges," they gradually prevailed, to the advantage of many families of limited means, and funerals with pomp became increasingly rare. I introduce this circumstance because it represents one of the earlier indications of those sentiments in favor of humility and equality which in the second half of the last century filtered down in so many ways from the upper classes and had such unexpected results.

We were not without our antiquaries, either. They had collections of paintings and copperplate engravings, but curiosities from the Frankfurt region were the object of especially avid search and preservation. The older regulations and mandates of the imperial city, which had not previously been collected, were now being carefully searched for, whether existing in print or manuscript, then put into chronological order and respectfully preserved as a treasure trove of local laws and traditions. The portraits of Frankfurt citizens, great numbers of which were extant, were gathered too, and constituted a special section of the collections.

It was such men above all that my father seems to have taken as his models. He possessed all the qualities of an honest and respected citizen. He too, after having built his house, put his various possessions in order: an excellent collection of maps by Schenk²⁷ and other outstanding geographers of the time, those aforementioned regulations and mandates, those portraits, a cabinet of old weapons, a cabinet of remarkable glasses, beakers, and goblets from Venice, natural curiosities, ivory objects, bronzes, and a hundred other things were sorted out and put on display, and whenever there was an auction I made sure to ask him for commissions to increase the stock.

I must mention one other notable family, because from my earliest childhood I heard so many curious things about it, and had some curious experiences of my own with its members: it was the Senckenbergs. I know little about the father, who was a man of means. He had three sons, who even as young men marked themselves as being thorough

eccentrics. That sort of behavior is not particularly approved of in a narrow-minded town where no one is supposed to stand out, whether for good or bad. Such eccentricity usually gives rise to mocking names and fanciful tales that are long remembered. The father lived on the corner of Hare Lane, a name derived from the emblem on his house that depicted not one, but three hares. Accordingly, the three brothers were always called the three hares, a nickname that took a long time to live down. But great merits often are heralded in youth under the guise of some oddness or awkwardness, and that was the case here. The eldest son later became the so highly reputed Imperial Councilor von Senckenberg. The second was elected to the magistracy and manifested excellent talents, even though he later misused them in a pettifogging, nay, heinous way, if not to the detriment of his native town, at least to that of his colleagues. The third brother,²⁸ a physician and a man of great integrity, had a small practice limited to prominent families, and even into his old age retained a certain strangeness of appearance. He was, to be sure, always neatly dressed, never being seen on the street except in proper shoes and stockings and a well-powdered, curly wig, with his hat held under his arm. He went on his way quickly, but with an oddly swaying gait, so that he was forever walking zigzag from one side of the street to the other. The wags said that this swerving step of his was an effort to elude the souls of his departed patients, who might pursue him if he walked in a straight line, or (they said) he was imitating people afraid of a crocodile. But all these jests and comic remarks behind his back gave way to respect for him when he converted his imposing house in the Eschenheim Lane, with its courtyard, garden, and all appurtenances, into a medical foundation, where, in addition to the establishment of a hospital exclusively for Frankfurt citizens, he set up a botanical garden, an anatomical theater, a chemistry laboratory, a large library, and a residence for the director, in a manner that would have done credit to any university.

Another excellent man, who exerted a very significant influence on me not only by his personality but also on account of his writings and his activities in our vicinity, was Karl Friedrich von Moser,²⁹ whose name was constantly heard in the Frankfurt area in connection with official affairs. He too had a profoundly moral character, to the extent that he was even attracted to the so-called "Pious Ones" for aid in combatting the frailties of his human nature. Thus he wanted to introduce greater conscientiousness into officialdom, as von Loen had wanted to do at court. The great multitude of small German courts displayed a throng of masters and servants, the former demanding unconditional obedience, while most of the latter wanted to act and serve solely in line with their convictions. This was the source of perpetual conflict, and of sudden changes and explosions, for the results of head-

strong actions show up and become injurious much more swiftly in a small orbit than in a large one. Many ruling houses were heavily in debt and imperial bankruptcy commissions were appointed. Others found themselves more or less speedily going down the same road, under which circumstances the servants could either be unscrupulous and look to their own advantage, or conscientious and make themselves unwelcome and hated. Moser wanted to be an effective statesman and public official, and his innate talent, which he had honed to expertness, was of great advantage to him in this. But at the same time he also wanted to remain a human being and a burgher, and to compromise his moral dignity as little as possible. His *Master and Servant*, his *Daniel in the Lions' Den*, and his *Relics* give a complete description of the situation, in which he felt, if not tormented, at least constricted. All these works indicate his impatience with conditions that must be borne even though they are unacceptable. Of course, thinking and feeling as he did, he had to look for a new position more than once, but his great skill always assured him a place. I remember him as a pleasant, lively, and also sensitive man.

From afar, however, the name Klopstock³⁰ was already having a strong effect on us. At first we wondered how such an excellent man could have such a peculiar name, but we soon grew accustomed to it and thought no more about the meaning of these syllables [i.e., bludgeon]. I had found only the older poets in my father's library, particularly the ones who had gradually emerged and grown famous at his time. All had used rhyme, and my father held that rhyme is indispensable to poems. Canitz, Hagedorn, Drollinger, Gellert, Creuz, and Haller³¹ stood side by side in a row of fine calfskin volumes. Next to them were Neukirch's *Telemachus*, Kopp's *Jerusalem Delivered*,³² and other translations. From childhood on, I had avidly read and partially memorized all these books, for which reason I was frequently called on to entertain our guests. In contrast to this, a period of vexation began for my father when, thanks to Klopstock's *Messiah*, verses that seemed to him no verses became the object of public veneration. He himself had scrupulously refused to purchase this work. But our family friend, Councilor Schneider, smuggled it in and let Mother and us children have it.

As a busy official, this man did little reading, but, as soon as it appeared, the *Messiah* had made a mighty impression on him. These so naturally expressed and yet so beautifully exalted pious feelings, and this pleasing language (even if one only regarded it as rhythmical prose), had so captivated this otherwise sober official that he viewed the first ten cantos³³—actually only these are under discussion here—as the most splendid devotional book; and every year in the Holy Week, a time when he could disentangle himself from all official duties, he read them

through in solitude and was fortified for the entire year. At first he tried imparting his feelings to his old friend, my father, but was dismayed to perceive that the latter had an incurable aversion to this work, with its wonderful inner meaning, because of what seemed to him, Councilor Schneider, a mere question of external form. Naturally they held repeated conversations on this subject, but opposition between them continued to grow. There were some hot-tempered scenes, and in the end the tractable man decided to keep silent about his favorite work rather than lose an old boyhood friend and a good Sunday supper besides.

It is everyone's most natural wish to make proselytes, and how well our friend felt himself rewarded in secret when he discovered a few hearts in the rest of the family that were so receptive to his saint! He needed his copy for only one week during the year, and the remainder of the time it was dedicated to our use. Mother kept it hidden, and we children took it out whenever we could, in our free periods, and would sit in some secluded corner learning the most striking passages by heart, and committed to memory as quickly as possible especially the sweetest or the most violent ones.

We vied with each other in reciting Portia's dream, and we had divided up the wild, desperate conversation between Satan and Adramelech, who have been plunged into the Red Sea. The first role, as the more vigorous one, devolved on me; the other, being a little more plaintive, was assumed by my sister. The reciprocal curses, hair-raising but euphonious, fairly flowed from our lips, and we seized every opportunity to greet each other with these hellish phrases.

Late one Saturday afternoon in winter—Father always had himself shaved in daylight, so that he could dress for church on Sunday morning at his convenience—we were sitting on footstools behind the stove and softly murmuring our customary curses while the barber was lathering his face. Suddenly, however, when Adramelech was supposed to seize Satan in an iron grasp, my sister took hold of me tightly and recited, rather quietly at first, but then with rising passion:

Help me, I beg of you, do! I'll even, if you demand it,
Monster, fall at your feet! You black and reprobate miscreant,
Help me! I suffer the pain of vengeful, eternal extinction!

Formerly, I could hate you, with horrible, glowing hatred!
But I can't anymore! This too is grievous affliction!

Up to this point, all had gone tolerably well. But then, with a fearsome voice, she loudly declaimed the following words:

OH, HOW CRUSHED I AM NOW!

The good barber-surgeon was startled and upset the shaving bowl over Father's chest. A big commotion followed, and a stern investigation was launched, especially in view of the serious accident that could have occurred, had the shaving itself been in progress. So as to avert all suspicion of mischievous intent, we confessed to our diabolical play-acting, and since it was only too evident that hexameters had instigated the mishap, they were of course once again banished in disgrace.

Thus do children and common folk often make a game, nay, a farce out of what is great and sublime. And how could they otherwise suffer and endure it?

Book Three

New Year's Day at that time filled the town with great activity because everyone went around exchanging personal felicitations. Even habitual stay-at-homes would throw on their best clothes in order to be courteous and affable for a moment to their friends and patrons. As for us children, the festivity we most looked forward to on that day was the one held at our grandfather's house. All the children would be assembled there very early in the morning to hear the drums, the oboes and clarinets, the trumpets and cymbals sounded by the military, the town musicians, and sundry others. We children distributed the New Year's gifts, all sealed and addressed, among the less distinguished well-wishers; and as the day progressed there was an increasing number of people of quality. First came relatives and intimate friends, then the minor state officials; the gentlemen of the council themselves unfailingly paid their respects to the chief magistrate, and a select group were entertained that evening in rooms seldom opened during the rest of the year. The fruit pies, the sponge cakes, the marzipan, and the sweet wine held a very great attraction for us children, and besides, the silverware given every year to the chief magistrate and the two burgomasters by several foundations was bestowed on the grandchildren and godchildren in a certain rank order. In a word, this festival had, on a small scale, everything that glorifies the more important ones.

New Year's Day 1759 approached, seeming as welcome and pleasant to us children as ever, but dark and ominous to older persons. To be sure, people were accustomed to having the French march through the town, for this was something that happened frequently and at close intervals, but never so frequently as in the last days of the old year. It was tradition in the old imperial city for the watchman in the main tower to sound his trumpet whenever troops moved up, but on this New Year's Day he seemed never to cease doing so, which was a sign that substantial armed columns were on the move from both sides. On this day they actually did pass through town in sizable contingents, and the people ran to watch them go by. We had been accustomed to see them marching through in small parties; however, these kept getting larger and larger, and there was no way of stopping them, even if anyone had wanted to. Suffice it to say that on the 2nd of January, after a column had proceeded across the bridge from Sachsenhausen through Passage Lane up to the constabulary, it halted, overpowered the little commando conducting it through, took possession of that station, marched down the Row, and forced the main station to surrender too,

after a slight resistance. In the twinkling of an eye these peaceful streets were transformed into a theater of war. The troops remained and bivouacked in them until accommodations could be arranged for them through regular billeting.

This unexpected burden, one they had been free of for many years, was a dreadful affliction for the complacent townspeople, but no one could have felt its inconvenience more than my father, who was expected to take foreign military occupants into his scarcely completed house, to grant them possession of his elegant, normally closed reception rooms, and to yield to the discretion of strangers something he was used to having under his precise rule and control. He, the Prussian sympathizer, was to be besieged by Frenchmen in his own four walls! To his way of thinking, it was the saddest thing that could have happened to him. Had he been able to take the matter more lightly, however—seeing that he spoke French well and had dignified and charming manners in company—he might have saved himself and us many a troubled hour, for they billeted the king's lieutenant with us, and he, although a military personage, was only charged with the arbitration of civil disputes, such as conflicts between townspeople and soldiers, debt collections, and lawsuits. This was Count Thoranc,³⁴ a native of Grasse in Provence, not far from Antibes: a tall, thin, grave person with a dignified, self-possessed manner and dark fiery eyes set in a face much disfigured by smallpox. His entry at once boded well for the houseowner. Their conversation concerned the various rooms, some of which were to be given up, others to remain with the family, and when the count heard a room full of paintings mentioned he immediately, although it was nighttime, asked permission to see the pictures, at least cursorily by candlelight. He was more than pleased with them, and treated my father, who was accompanying him, with the greatest courtesy. When he heard that most of the painters were still alive and residing in and around Frankfurt, he declared that it was his dearest wish to meet them very soon and set them to work.

But even being approached from the direction of art failed to alter my father's sentiments or soften his character. While he let happen what he could not prevent, he remained aloof and uncooperative, and regarded the extraordinary things going on around him as intolerable down to the last detail.

Meanwhile, Count Thoranc was behaving impeccably. He would not even have his maps nailed to the walls, for fear of ruining the new wallpaper. His personnel was adroit, quiet, and orderly. But admittedly, since he was given no peace by day or night—one complainant after the other, prisoners brought in and led away, all officers and adjutants ushered in—and since, besides, the count daily maintained a free table, there was a hum of activity in our moderately-sized house (planned for

only one family and having an open staircase that led to all floors) as if in a beehive, although all activities were conducted in a very restrained, serious, and precise manner.

Fortunately, someone was found who could mediate between the sulking householder, with his self-torturing hypochondria that grew worse every day, and the benevolent, but nevertheless very serious and punctilious military guest. It was the good-natured interpreter, a handsome, portly, cheerful Frankfurt burgher who spoke French well, was very adaptable, and made a joking matter of many a small unpleasantness. Through him, my mother made the count understand the predicament she was in because of her husband's attitude. He described the situation so aptly, stressing the newness of the house (which was not even completely finished), the owner's natural tendency to be reclusive, his preoccupation with his family's education, and much besides, that the count, who, for his part, prided himself on his fairness, incorruptibility, and honorable conduct, now resolved to become the very model of a billeted officer. He really did abide firmly by this, under many different circumstances, during the several years of his stay.

My mother had some knowledge of Italian, and indeed no one in the family was a stranger to this tongue. Therefore she immediately decided to learn French. She had stood sponsor to the interpreter's child amidst these stormy events, and since he was now a "relative" through baptism, he felt a double affection for our family and devoted every spare moment to this project of his child's godmother (for he lived directly across from us). First of all he taught her those phrases that she would have to use in personal dealings with the count. This was quite a success. The count was flattered that the lady of the house should take such pains at her age. Since there was a strain of cheerfulness and wit in his manner, and he liked to demonstrate a certain reserved gallantry, an excellent relationship developed between them, and the two baptismal "cousins," in partnership, could obtain their every wish.

Had it been possible, as said before, to cheer my father up, our altered situation would only have been slightly inconvenient. The count most rigorously avoided any hint of self-interest: he even refused the gifts due his position, while the least suggestion of a bribe was rejected angrily, nay, with punishment; and his personnel was under very strict orders not to cause the householder the slightest expense. On the other hand, we children were given generous helpings of his dessert. In this connection, to illustrate the naiveté of those times, I must relate that Mother greatly distressed us one day by throwing away the ice cream sent us from his table because she could not imagine the stomach tolerating a genuine ice, however saturated it might be with sugar.

Beside all these delicacies, which we gradually did learn to enjoy

and tolerate quite well, we children also found it very pleasant to be freed, to a certain extent, from our regular lessons and strict discipline. Father's ill humor intensified, for he could not resign himself to the inevitable. How he tormented himself, our mother, the baptismal relative, the councilors, and all his friends, just to be rid of the count! They argued in vain that, under the circumstances, it was a real blessing to have such a man present in the house, and that if the count were billeted elsewhere the result would be a constant exchange either of officers or common soldiers. None of these arguments had any effect on him. The existing situation seemed so unbearable that sheer ill humor prevented him from seeing that something worse might follow.

In this way he became paralyzed in his ability to act, an ability which he was chiefly accustomed to exercise on us, and he no longer demanded that we carry out our assignments with the old exactitude. Whenever we had a chance we tried to satisfy our curiosity about military things and other public matters, not only at home but also in the streets. We could easily go out into them because the front door was open day and night and the sentries guarding it paid no attention to the running in and out of restless children.

The various cases decided at the king's lieutenant's tribunal were given a special, rather charming twist by his attempt, which he thought quite important, to accompany every decision with some witty, ingenious, and cheerful remark. His commands were sternly just, but his way of stating them was humorous and piquant. He seemed to have taken the Duke of Osuna³⁵ as his model. Hardly a day passed that the interpreter did not relate one or other such anecdote to amuse us and our mother. This lively man made a little collection of these Solomonic decisions. However, all I have now is a general impression of them and I do not remember any specific example.

In time we became better and better acquainted with the count's remarkable character. The man himself was acutely aware of his idiosyncrasies. At certain times a sort of ill humor, hypochondria, or whatever one may call this evil demon, would take hold of him, and during those hours, which sometimes stretched into days, he would retreat into his room, where he would see no one except his valet, and he could not be persuaded to give an audience even to urgent cases. But as soon as the evil spirit passed from him, he appeared to be as mild, cheerful, and busy as before. We gathered from the comments of his valet, Saint-Jean, who was a thin little man, jauntily good-natured, that the count in former years, while in the grip of such a mood, had caused great misfortune. In his present important position, which exposed him to public view, he earnestly intended to be on his guard against similar deviations.

In his very first days of residence, the count summoned all the

Frankfurt painters, e.g., Hirt, Schütz, Trautmann, Nothnagel, and Juncker, into his presence. They displayed some finished works of theirs, and the count bought everything they had for sale. My pretty attic room under the gable was given up to him and promptly transformed into a little gallery and studio, where he meant to keep all these artists busy for some time, chiefly Seekatz of Darmstadt, whose technique he greatly admired, especially in simple, natural compositions. To this end, he sent to Grasse for the measurements of all the large and small rooms in his brother's house there, which was apparently a fine one, and then he discussed the wall spaces with the artists in order to determine the sizes of the numerous oil paintings they were to make, not to be set in frames, but attached to the walls as coverings. The work now began enthusiastically. Seekatz undertook the rustic scenes, and in these his old men and children, being painted directly from life, turned out splendidly. But he had less success with his youths, for they were mostly too thin, while his women failed to please for the opposite reason. Since his wife, a fat little person, good but unattractive, would not permit him to have any model but herself, the result could never be agreeable. Moreover, he had been forced to enlarge the proportions of his figures. His trees were realistic, but with pedantically painted foliage. He had studied under Brinkmann, whose technique in easel paintings is irreproachable.

Schütz, the landscape painter, was perhaps the one who managed best. He had the Rhine region completely in his command, as well as the sunny tone that enlivens it in the fine season of the year. He was not entirely unaccustomed to doing large-scale works, and in them too the poses and execution were satisfactory. The pictures he produced were very cheerful.

Trautmann "rembrandtized" several New Testament miracles of awakening the dead and, besides, set villages and mills ablaze. On the basis of the room plans I ascertained that Trautmann too was to have a whole gallery devoted to his works. Hirt painted several good forests of oak and beech trees. His herds of cattle were commendable. Juncker, being accustomed to imitate Dutch paintings of the minutely detailed kind, was the one least able to adapt himself to this wallpaper style. However, in return for good payment, he condescended to decorate some sections with flowers and fruit.

I had known all these men from my earliest childhood, and had often visited their studios; and, since the count did not mind having me around, I was present during the planning, consulting, and commissioning, and also when the works were delivered. I readily expressed my opinions, especially when sketches and designs were submitted. Prior to this time I had earned the reputation among collectors of paintings of being able to tell right away, particularly at the auctions I so

regularly attended, what any historical picture represented, and whether the subject was taken from Biblical or secular history, or from mythology. I may not always have grasped the meaning of allegorical pictures, but at least there was seldom anyone present who could do better than I. Frequently I had also prevailed on the artists to depict some subject or other, and I exercised the privilege in this present situation happily and heartily. I still remember having written an extensive composition to describe twelve pictures illustrating the story of Joseph, and several of these were then painted.

Having cited all these achievements, which were quite laudable for a mere boy, I also must mention a small humiliation I suffered within this artistic circle. Of course, I was very familiar with all the pictures that had gradually been brought into that room, and my youthful curiosity left nothing unseen and uninvestigated. Once I found a small black box behind the stove. Immediately I wanted to see what might be concealed in it and, without much hesitation, drew out the bolt. The picture it contained was not one of those usually exhibited openly! Though I tried to push the bolt right back in again, I was not quick enough. The count walked in and caught me in the act.—“Who gave you permission to open this box?” he said with his king’s lieutenant expression. I did not have much of an answer to that, and he gravely pronounced my punishment at once: “For a week you will not enter this room.” I bowed and left. I obeyed his command very punctiliously too, much to the annoyance of good Seekatz, who was working in the room at that time and enjoyed my company. With a touch of malice, I pushed my obedience to such extremes that when, as was my habit, I brought Seekatz his coffee, I would set it down on the threshold and he would have to get up from his work to fetch it. He took this so amiss that he nearly lost his temper with me.

But now it seems necessary to show and explain more fully how I made out in such cases, more or less easily, with the French language, which, after all, I had not studied. Here, again, my innate ability to grasp a language’s sound and timbre quickly, and also its rhythm, accent, tone, and other external features, stood me in good stead. I knew many of the words from Latin, while Italian supplied still more, and thus before long I had gathered enough from the servants and soldiers, the guards and the visitors, to be able at least to handle individual questions and answers, though not to take part in a conversation. But all this was of minor importance compared to the benefits I received from the theater. I had obtained a free pass from my grandfather and made daily use of it, much to my father’s displeasure, but with my mother’s encouragement. Here I sat now, in the parterre facing a foreign stage, paying rapt attention to movements, to what was expressed through inflections and miming, for I understood little or nothing of what was

being said up there and could find my entertainment only in the gestures and tone of voice. Comedy was the hardest for me to understand, because it was spoken rapidly and dealt with the affairs of ordinary life, the terminology of which was quite unknown to me. Tragedy was played less often, but its measured pace, the rhythmic beat of its alexandrines, and the universality of its language made it more comprehensible in every sense. It was not long before I was taking out Racine from my father's library and theatrically declaiming his plays to myself, just as my ear and its closely related organ, the tongue, had apprehended them. Although I did this with great animation, I could not understand any speech as a coherent whole. Indeed, I memorized whole passages and recited them like a trained parrot, something made easier for me by the fact that I had previously memorized Bible passages well beyond a child's comprehension and had learned to intone them like a Protestant preacher. French verse comedy was very popular at that time. The plays of Destouches, Marivaux, and La Chaussée were performed frequently, and I still clearly remember some of their typical personages. Less of Molière has stayed with me. The play that impressed me most was Lemierre's *Hypermnestra*, which, being new, was carefully staged and often repeated. A very charming impression was made on me by *Le devin du village*, *Rose et Colas*, and *Annette et Lubin*. I can still recall those beribboned youths and maidens and their gestures. Soon the desire stirred in me to have a look round the theater itself, since there were many opportunities to do so. I was not always patient enough to hear the play out, and some of the time would be spent playing games with other children of my age in the corridors or even, in milder weather, outside the door. We were joined in these by a handsome lively boy from the theatrical troupe whom I had seen, but not especially noticed, in some small roles. He could communicate best with me because I tried out my French on him, and he attached himself to me because there were no other boys of his age or nationality in the theater or elsewhere in the vicinity. We also associated outside of theater hours, and he seldom left me in peace, even during performances. He was the most engaging little braggart, babbling away charmingly and endlessly, and he told me so much about his adventures, duels, and other remarkable things that I was not only exceptionally well entertained but also learned more from him in four weeks about the language and how to communicate in it than one would have thought possible. And no one knew how I had so suddenly, as though by inspiration, mastered the foreign tongue.

Very early in our acquaintance he took me backstage, primarily into the assembly rooms, where the actors and actresses waited in the interval and got dressed and undressed. The place was neither suitable nor convenient, because the theater, being nothing more than a con-

verted concert hall, lacked special accommodations behind the stage for the actors. There was only a fair-sized side room, previously used for card games, and here the two sexes usually mingled and seemed to feel as little embarrassment among themselves as in front of us children when donning and changing pieces of clothing, although the strictest modesty was not always observed. I had never experienced anything like that before, but after repeated visits I got used to it and found it quite natural.

It did not take long for me to develop a particular and personal interest. Young Derones (as I shall call him), with whom I continued associating, was, aside from his boasting, a well-behaved boy of good character. He introduced me to his sister, who was a few years older than we were. She was a very pleasant girl with a good figure, regular features, olive complexion, and dark hair and eyes, but there was a quietness, even a sad note, in her whole demeanor. I tried hard to please her, but I could not make her notice me. Young girls consider themselves very much in advance of boys who are still younger, and are interested only in older youths. So they behave like an aunt to the boy who bestows his first affection on them. There was a younger brother too, but I had nothing to do with him.

Sometimes, when their mother was at a rehearsal or a party, we met in their lodgings to play or converse. I never went there without bringing the pretty girl a flower, a piece of fruit, or something else, which she would always accept very graciously and politely thank me for; but I never saw her sad expression grow more cheerful or found any trace of further regard for me. Finally I discovered her secret: Behind the elegant silk curtains adorning his mother's bed the boy showed me a pastel drawing, the portrait of a handsome man, and commented, with a sly look on his face, that this was not his papa, but something like a papa. And, while he was lauding this man and telling me many stories about him in his long-winded, boastful way, I came to the conclusion that the daughter was indeed the father's child, but that the other two belonged to this family friend. Now I understood her sad look and liked her all the more.

My affection for this girl helped me to put up with her brother's fantastic stories, which he sometimes carried too far. I often had to listen to lengthy accounts of his heroic deeds, how he had already fought many duels, but with no intention of injuring his opponents: all had been done for the sake of honor. He said he had always been able to disarm his adversary, and then would forgive him. In fact, he claimed to be so expert at parrying that it once even embarrassed him, for he had hurled a foe's sword up into a high tree and it could hardly be retrieved.

My visits to the theater were much facilitated by the fact that my

pass, having been issued by the chief magistrate, was good for all seats, including those in the proscenium. The latter was in the French style, very deep and lined on both sides with seats. These were placed behind a low barrier and arranged in several ascending rows, with the first row raised only slightly above stage level. The whole section was considered a special place of honor, where usually only officers sat, although such proximity to the actors, while I will not say it destroyed all illusion, did interfere with one's pleasure. Yes, that practice, or malpractice, which Voltaire complained about so much, was still experienced by me and seen with my own eyes. If the house was very full, and high-ranking officers, perhaps at times when troops were passing through, demanded that place of honor, which was usually already occupied, then a few more rows of chairs and benches would be placed into the proscenium and onto the stage itself. Then the poor heroes and heroines had no choice but to reveal their secrets to each other in what modest space was left between all the uniforms and medals. I even saw *Hypermnestra* played under such circumstances.

The curtain did not fall between the acts, and I shall mention another strange custom, one I could not but find very shocking, since to me, as a good German boy, it conflicted intolerably with the idea of art. That is to say, the theater was considered a most sacred place, and anyone causing a disturbance there would have to be reprimanded immediately and most severely for having committed *lèse-majesté* against the audience. Accordingly, two grenadiers, with their rifles held next to them, were stationed in public view at either side of the rear curtain, and in every comedy they were witness to what was happening in the bosom of the family. Since, as I have said, the curtain was not lowered between the acts, one beheld two others relieving them when the intermission music began, stiffly marching out from the wings to stand in front of the first ones, who then withdrew in the same measured fashion. While such an arrangement would be well qualified, at any time, to destroy the last vestige of a theatrical illusion, what could be more shocking than that this was happening at a time when, in accordance with Diderot's principles and examples, the most natural naturalness was required on stage, and the real goal of art was declared to be a perfect illusion! However, tragedy was exempted from this military police control, and the heroes of antiquity were privileged to guard themselves. Nevertheless, the aforesaid grenadiers were standing by closely enough, in the wings.

Another thing I want to mention is that I saw Diderot's *Père de famille* and Palissot's *Les philosophes*.³⁶ In the latter play I still remember well how the philosopher looked, going on all fours and biting into a raw head of lettuce.

Yet all this theatrical variety could not always keep us children inside

the playhouse. In fine weather we played in front of it, or nearby, and engaged in all sorts of antics, which, especially on Sundays and festival days, by no means fitted in with our clothing. For I and boys like me appeared in public at that time dressed as I was seen to be in that fairy tale, with my hat under my arm and a sword whose guard was embellished with a big silk bow. Once, when we had been playing for quite a while, Derones joining in, it occurred to him to assert that I had insulted him and would have to give him satisfaction. While I had no idea of what prompted this, I accepted the challenge and was ready to draw my sword. He declared, however, that in such cases it was customary to retire to some lonely spot, where the affair might be settled more conveniently. Accordingly we walked off behind some sheds and assumed the correct posture. The duel proceeded in a somewhat theatrical fashion, with blades ringing and thrusts going offside. In the excitement of the action, however, he caught the point of his sword in my guard ribbon. The bow was pierced, and he assured me that he had now received the most complete satisfaction. Then he embraced me, also very theatrically, and we went to the nearest coffeehouse to get over our excitement with a glass of almond milk and to retie the old bond of friendship that much more firmly.

At this juncture I want to relate another adventure I had in the playhouse, although at a later time. I was sitting quietly in the parterre with one of my playfellows, and watched with pleasure as a handsome boy of approximately our age, the son of a visiting French dancing master, performed a solo dance with much ease and grace. In dancer's fashion, he was dressed in a close-fitting jacket of red silk which ended in a short crinoline that extended down to his knees, like a footman's apron. After we had joined the whole audience in applauding this young artist, I was inspired, I know not why, to make a moral observation. I said to my companion: "This boy had a beautiful costume and looked very fine in it. But who knows what a ragged shirt he may have to sleep in tonight!"—Everyone was already standing, but we could not move because of the crowd. A woman who had sat next to me and was now standing beside me chanced to be the mother of this young artist, and she took great offense at my remark. Unfortunately she knew enough German to understand me, and spoke it just well enough to berate me. She gave me a severe dressing-down: Who might *I* be, she said, to presume to express doubts about this young man's family and prosperity? At all events, she thought she might consider him as good as I was, and his talents might well be preparing him a good fortune beyond my wildest dreams. She held this lecture in the midst of the crowd and attracted the attention of the people around us, who supposed I must have said something terribly rude. Since I could neither excuse myself nor escape her, I felt extremely embarrassed, and, when she paused

for breath, I said, not meaning anything by it: "Now, why all this fuss? Here today, gone tomorrow!"—The woman seemed to be struck dumb by these words. She gave me a look and put distance between us as soon as this was at all possible. I gave no further thought to what I had said. It occurred to me again only some time afterwards, when the boy, instead of performing again, took sick, and quite dangerously so. I cannot say whether or not he died.

The ancients also had a high regard for predictions consisting of an inopportune or improperly spoken word, and the remarkable fact remains that all peoples and all times have always retained the same forms of belief and superstition.

Now, from the first day onward, after our town was occupied, there were continuous amusements, especially for children and young people. Theater and balls, parades and passing troops drew our attention now here, now there. The passing troops particularly became more frequent, and a soldier's life seemed quite merry and pleasant.

The presence of the king's lieutenant in our house gave us the advantage, over a period of time, of seeing all the notable personages in the French army and especially of getting a close look at the chief commanders, whose names were already known to us by reputation. Thus from our staircases and landings, as though from a gallery, we could very conveniently watch these general officers pass before us. First of all I remember the Prince de Soubise³⁷ as a handsome, affable gentleman; but my most distinct memory is of Marshal de Broglie³⁸ as a youngish man, short but well built, quick and lively in his movements, darting intelligent looks from side to side.

The marshal came more than once to the king's lieutenant, and it was obvious that important matters were being discussed. Scarcely had we adapted ourselves, after the first three months, to the billeting, when the news began to spread covertly that the Allies were on the march and Duke Ferdinand of Brunswick³⁹ was coming to drive the French from the Rhine. The French could not boast of any special success in the war, and so were not highly respected. Since the battle of Rossbach they were considered worthy of scorn. Duke Ferdinand, on the other hand, inspired the greatest confidence, and all the Prussian sympathizers looked forward longingly to liberation from their present burden. My father grew somewhat more cheerful, but my mother was worried. She was shrewd enough to realize that our small current trouble might easily be exchanged for some great hardship, the signs being all too plain that the French did not intend to march against the duke but would instead await an attack nearby the town. A French defeat, a rout, a defense of the town—even if it were only to cover their retreat and to hold the bridge—a bombardment, a pillaging, all of these things presented themselves to an excited imagination, and both parties felt concern.

My mother, who could bear anything except worry, had the interpreter report her fears to the count, from whom she received the standard answer in such cases: she should be quite calm, there was nothing to fear, moreover she should keep silent and not discuss the matter with anyone.

Numbers of troops moved through town; we learned that they halted near Bergen. The coming and going, the riding and running constantly increased, and our house was in an uproar day and night. During this time I saw Marshal de Broglie, who was always cheerful, with an expression and behavior that never varied from one time to the next. Afterwards, I was pleased to find that this man, whose personality had made such a good and lasting impression on me, was laudably mentioned in history.

So then, after a restless Holy Week 1759, Good Friday finally arrived. Great calm announced the coming storm. We children were forbidden to leave the house, but Father had no peace, and went out. The battle began. I climbed to the topmost garret, where, even if I could not see the area, I could clearly hear the thunder of the cannons and the concentrated small arms fire. After several hours, our first evidence of the battle was to be seen in a procession of wagons, on which the wounded, with their various sad mutilations and facial expressions, were gently driven past us to be deposited at the Our Lady Cloister, now serving as a military hospital. Immediately the townspeople's sympathy was stirred. Those men still able to accept something were handed beer, wine, bread, and money. When, after a while, wounded and captured Germans were espied in the procession, pity knew no bounds, and it seemed as if every person wanted to strip himself of everything movable that he owned, in order to assist these distressed countrymen.

These captives, however, were a sign that the battle was going badly for the Allies. My father, convinced by his partisan spirit that the Allies would win, was seized by such reckless enthusiasm that he went forth to meet the hoped-for victors, not taking into account that the vanquished would have to flee past him beforehand. He went first to his garden outside the Friedberg Gate, where he found everything deserted and quiet. Then he ventured onto the Bornheim Heath, where he soon caught sight of various scattered stragglers and baggage soldiers, who were passing the time by shooting at boundary stones, so that the ricocheting lead whizzed around the curious wanderer's head. Therefore he thought it more advisable to go back, and, after some inquiry, he discovered what he should have already surmised from the sound of the firing, namely, that things were going well for the French and they had no thought of surrendering. At home again and quite disgusted, he lost his habitual composure altogether at the sight of his wounded and captured countrymen. He too ordered many gifts distributed to the men

passing by, but only Germans were to have them, which was not always possible, since fate had loaded friends and enemies together on the wagons.

We children and our mother had from the start relied on the count's word and therefore spent a fairly calm day. We had been delighted, and our mother doubly relieved, when in the morning she had consulted the oracle of her devotional book, *The Little Treasure Chest*, with a pin prick and received a very consoling answer for both the present and the future. We wished our father belief and sentiments like ours, we cajoled him as much as we could, and we begged him to take some nourishment, for he had gone without any all day. But he rejected our caresses and all food, and took himself off to his room. Our joy, meanwhile, went undisturbed. The matter was settled. The king's lieutenant, who had been on horseback today, contrary to his habit, at last returned. His presence in the house was required more than ever. We jumped up to greet him, kissed his hands, and showed our delight. He seemed greatly pleased by this. "Well!" he said, in a friendlier way than usual, "I am also happy for your sakes, dear children!" At once he gave orders for us to be brought candy, sweet wine, the best of everything, and then he went to his room, already surrounded by a throng of people with petitions and urgent demands.

Now we enjoyed a delicious collation, but felt sorry that our good father did not care to participate in it, and we importuned our mother to make him join us. But she was wiser than we and well knew how offensive such gifts would be to him. Meanwhile she had prepared an evening meal and would gladly have sent a portion up to his room, but he never permitted such a breach of order, not even in the most extreme cases. After the gift of sweets had been put away, we tried to persuade him to come down into the regular dining room. Finally he did let himself be swayed, though reluctantly; but we had no premonition of the calamity we were preparing for him and ourselves. The staircase ran openly through the whole house past all the corridors. In descending, Father had to pass directly by the count's room. Because the corridor was full of people, the count had decided to step out into it, so as to handle several matters at once, and unfortunately this happened to be the very moment when Father was coming down. The count happily approached himself, greeted him, and said, "No doubt you wish to congratulate yourself and us that this dangerous affair has turned out so fortunately."—"By no means!" replied my father, inwardly seething. "I wish they had sent you to the devil, even if it had meant my going along with you."—The count paused for a moment, and then flew into a rage. "You shall pay for that!" he shouted. "You shall not insult me and our just cause like that with impunity!"

Meanwhile Father calmly finished descending the stairs, joined us

at table, seemed more cheerful than before, and began to eat. We rejoiced at that, not knowing by what dubious means he had rolled the stone from his heart. Shortly afterwards, Mother was called away, and we were very much tempted to tattle to Father about the sweets the count had given us. Mother did not return. Finally the interpreter entered. At a sign from him we were sent to bed, and since it was quite late, we willingly obeyed. After a night of peaceful slumber we heard about the violent tremor which had shaken the house the evening before. The king's lieutenant had immediately given orders for Father to be brought to the guardhouse. His subalterns well knew that he was never to be contradicted, yet occasionally they had won his gratitude by delaying execution of his orders. Our cousin the interpreter, who never lost his presence of mind, was able to stir up this thought in them very strongly. The tumult was already so great that their hesitation could easily be concealed and excused. He had called my mother away and put the adjutant in her hands, as it were, hoping that she might accomplish some postponement with her pleas and expostulations. He himself hurried upstairs to the count, who, showing great self-control, had immediately retired to his inner room, preferring to let even the most pressing business wait a moment rather than vent his anger, now definitely aroused, on some innocent person and thus make a decision unworthy of himself.

The interpreter's manner of addressing the count, as well as the whole course of their conversation, were repeated to us so often by this portly cousin of ours, who rather plumed himself on his good success, that indeed I can still sketch it from memory.

The interpreter had dared to open the door to the inner room and enter, an action that was strictly forbidden. "What do you want?" the count shouted at him angrily. "Out with you! No one but Saint-Jean has the right to come in here."

"Well," replied the interpreter, "imagine for a moment that I am Saint-Jean."

"That would require quite an imagination. Two of him would not make one of you. Go away!"

"My lord, you have received a great gift from Heaven, and I appeal to that."

"You are trying to flatter me! You will not succeed."

"You have the great gift, my lord, of being able to listen to other people's views even in moments of passion, in moments of rage."

"Indeed, indeed! Right now it is a question of views to which I have listened for far too long. I know only too well that we are not liked here, that these burghers look askance at us."

"Not all of them!"

"A great many! What! These townspeople, do they claim to be im-

perial citizens? They have seen their emperor elected and crowned, and yet when he has been unjustly attacked and is in danger of losing his lands and of being defeated by a usurper, and then fortunately finds loyal allies who will shed their blood and spend their money to help him, these townspeople are not even willing to shoulder the slight burden assigned to them as their part in humbling the empire's enemy."

"Certainly you have been acquainted with such sentiments for a long time, and, like a wise man, have tolerated them; but they are only held by a minority. Just a few people, who have been dazzled by the enemy's brilliant qualities. You yourself esteem him as an extraordinary man.⁴⁰ Just a few people, you know that!"

"Yes, indeed! I have known and been tolerant much too long. Otherwise this man would not have dared to cast such insults in my face at such a significant moment. However many of them there may be, they shall all see themselves punished in this bold representative of theirs, and can make a note of what is in store for them."

"Just a postponement, my lord!"

"In certain cases one cannot act quickly enough."

"Just a short postponement!"

"Neighbor! You are trying to entice me into a false move. You shall fail."

"I neither want to entice you into a false move nor restrain you from one. Your resolve is just, and befits you as a Frenchman and the king's lieutenant. But consider that you are also Count Thoranc."

"He has no voice in this matter."

"Still, the good man should be granted a hearing."

"Well, then, what would he say?"

"'My lord King's Lieutenant!' he would say, 'you have been patient for such a long time with so many unenlightened, unwilling, unfit people, except when they made things too impossibly hard for you. Admittedly, this man has been impossible. But do force yourself to be patient, my lord King's Lieutenant! And everyone will laud and praise you for it.'"

"As you know, sometimes I can suffer your nonsense. But do not abuse my kindness. These people, are they totally blind? What would be their fate at this very moment, if we had lost the battle? We would be fighting up to the gates, we would seal off the town, we would halt, we would defend ourselves in order to cover our retreat across the bridge. Do you suppose the enemy would be sitting there with his hands in his lap? He would be throwing grenades and whatever else was at hand, and these would start fires wherever they could. This house-owner of yours, what does he want? A fireball would probably be bursting into these rooms, immediately followed by another—into these rooms with that confounded Peking wallpaper I have spared and refrained from nailing maps on! They should have been on their knees all day long."

"That is just where a great many people were!"

"They should have entreated Heaven to bless us, and they should have greeted the generals and other officers with cheers and honors, and the exhausted common soldiers with refreshments. Instead of that, the finest, happiest moments of my life, the fruit of so much worry and strain, have been spoiled for me by this venomous partisan spirit!"

"It is indeed partisan spirit, and you will only intensify it if you punish this man. Those who share his sentiments will decry you as a tyrant, a barbarian, and they will view him as a martyr who has suffered for the good cause. And even those of another opinion, who now oppose him, will see him only as their fellow citizen and pity him. They will concede that you are right, but will still find you have acted too harshly."

"I have already listened to you too long. Be off with you!"

"Hear just one word more! Consider that this is the most dreadful thing that could happen to this man and his family. You have no reason to thank the man of the house for any good will, but the mistress of the house has been most obliging, and the children look on you as their uncle. At one blow you will have destroyed the peace and happiness of this home forever. Yes, one may well say that a bomb falling on the house would not inflict greater damage on it. I have so often *admired* you for your composure, my lord Count; now give me reason to *worship* you. A warrior who regards himself as a guest even in the house of an enemy is worthy of all respect; and here we have no enemy, but merely an aberrant mind. Overcome your resentment, and it will redound to your eternal fame!"

"I cannot imagine how that could happen," answered the count with a smile.

"Why, quite naturally," replied the interpreter. "I have not sent the wife and children to kneel at your feet, because I know you hate such scenes, but let me portray this wife and these children in their gratitude to you. Let me describe how for the rest of their lives they will talk about the Battle of Bergen and your magnanimity on that day, how they will tell it to their children and children's children, and will also awaken other people's interest in you. An action like that can never be forgotten."

"You have not hit my vulnerable spot, Interpreter. I seldom think of any posthumous fame, which is for others, not for me. My concern, rather, is to do the right thing at the given moment, not to shirk my duty, and not to compromise my honor. We have already wasted too many words. Now begone—and get your thanks from those ingrates I am sparing!"

Surprised and moved by this unexpectedly happy conclusion, the interpreter could not refrain from tears, and was about to kiss the count's hands. But the latter repulsed him, saying gravely and sternly,

"You know I cannot bear that sort of thing!" And with these words he stepped out into the corridor to take care of his urgent business and to hear the petitions of the many people waiting for him. Thus the matter was settled, and the next morning, while enjoying what remained of yesterday's gift of sweets, we celebrated the passing of an evil whose menacing approach we had fortunately slept through.

Whether the interpreter really spoke so wisely, or whether he was merely imagining the scene in the way one is apt to do after carrying something off well and successfully, is a moot question. At any rate, he never varied in the retelling of it. Suffice it to say, he deemed this to have been the most difficult, but also the most glorious, day of his life.

The count's great abhorrence of all false ceremony, his rejection of any title not due him, and his wittiness when he was in a good mood can be illustrated by the following little incident:

A man of the upper class, but one of those abstruse, reclusive Frankfurters, felt constrained to object to the quartering of soldiers in his house. He came in person, and the interpreter offered him his services; however, the man thought he did not require them. He stepped before the count with a proper bow and said, "Excellency!" The count returned the bow—and the "Excellency." Taken aback by this salutation, and convinced that he had used too mean a form of address, he bowed more deeply and said, "Your Grace!"—"Good sir," said the count very gravely, "let us stop here, for otherwise we shall soon arrive at 'Your Majesty.'"—The man became extremely embarrassed and did not know what to say. The interpreter, who stood some distance away, was malicious enough not to bestir himself, although he was well informed about the whole matter. The count, however, continued with great good cheer: "Let us begin again, dear sir. What is your name?"—"Spangenberg," the latter replied.—"And I," said the count, "am called Thoranc. Spangenberg, what do you want of Thoranc? And now let us be seated. The affair will be settled at once."

And indeed the affair was promptly settled, to the satisfaction of him whom I have here called Spangenberg, and the same evening the malicious interpreter not only told the story to our family circle but acted it out with all the details and gestures.

After all the confusion, unrest, and distress, we quickly recovered our previous confidence and that unconcern which especially children feel in their daily life, if things are going at all well. My enthusiasm for the French theater increased with every performance. I never missed an evening, even though every time that I joined my family at table after the performance (often making do with a few leftovers because they were already dining), I had to endure my father's constant reproaches: to wit, that the theater was of no use and could lead to noth-

ing. In this situation I regularly adduced each and every argument available to the defenders of drama when they get into the same straits I was in. Though vice seemed to prevail and virtue to suffer (I said), these matters were set right again in the end through poetic justice. I stressed very strongly such beautiful examples of punished transgression as *Miss Sara Sampson*⁴¹ and *The London Merchant*.⁴² On the other hand, I often lost the argument when *Les fourberies de Scapin*⁴³ and its ilk had been on the program and I had it thrown up to me that the audience took pleasure in the deceptions of intriguing servants and in the successful follies of profligate youths. Neither side convinced the other; yet my father quickly became reconciled to the stage when he saw the incredible rapidity of my improvement in the French language.

One must accept it as a fact of human nature that if a person sees an action, he will want to attempt the same himself, whether he has the skill for it or not. I had now made my way through practically the whole repertory of our French theater. Some of the plays were being played for the second and third time, and every one, from the most dignified tragedy down to the most frivolous afterpiece, had passed before my eyes and mind. And, just as I had ventured to imitate Terence in my earlier childhood, now, as an older boy, responding to a much more insistent and livelier stimulus, I did not hesitate to copy the French style also, to the best of my ability, or inability. Some half-mythological, half-allegorical plays in the manner of Piron⁴⁴ were being given at that time. They were a sort of parody and were very well received. I was particularly attracted by such features as: the golden winglets of a smiling Mercury, the thunderbolt of a disguised Jupiter, an amorous Danae, or whatever beauty it might be who was visited by the gods—and sometimes they even condescended to come to a shepherdess or huntress. And since motifs like these frequently buzzed around in my head from reading Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Pomey's *Pantheon mythicum*,⁴⁵ I soon had pieced together a similar playlet in my mind, but can say no more about it than that the scene was bucolic and there was no dearth of princesses, or princes, or gods. Mercury, especially, was such a vivid presence to me all the while that I would still swear I saw him with my own eyes.

I submitted a very neat copy of this play, prepared by myself, to my friend Derones, who accepted it with great formality, looking like a genuine patron. He paged through the manuscript, pointed out a few grammatical errors, found some of the speeches too long, and ended by promising to examine the work more closely and to criticize it when he had the requisite leisure. When I diffidently asked whether the play had any chance of being produced, he assured me this was not at all impossible. Influence, he said, counted for a great deal in the theater, and I would have his whole-hearted support. However, the matter had

to be kept secret, for he himself had once startled the directors with a play he had written, and it would surely have been produced if they had not discovered prematurely that he was the author. I promised him all possible discretion, and already imagined the title of my play posted in big letters on the street corners and in the squares.

My friend may have been frivolous otherwise, but this opportunity to play the expert seemed to suit him only too well. He read the play through carefully, and when he sat down with me to "change a few details," before our conversation was over he had turned the whole thing round and round, so that not one stone remained on top of the other. He crossed out, he made additions, he deleted one personage, he substituted another: in short, he proceeded in such a madly arbitrary way that my hair stood on end. I presumed he knew what he was doing, and did not interfere; for he had already told me so often and so much about Aristotle's three unities, the regularity of the French stage, verisimilitude, the harmony of verses, and everything associated with these matters that I considered him not merely informed but also thoroughly grounded. He inveighed against the English and was contemptuous of the Germans. In a word, he recited the whole dramaturgical litany to me, the same that I have had to hear again so often in my life.

Like the boy in the fable who let a fox pluck his pet dove, I took my tattered creation back home with me and tried to repair it, but in vain. Nevertheless, not wanting to abandon it completely, I had our amanuensis prepare a clean copy from my original manuscript, after I made a few changes, and this I presented to my father. What I gained, at least, was that for a while he let me eat my evening meal in peace when I returned from the theater.

This unsuccessful attempt made me reflective, and I determined henceforth to become acquainted with the original sources of these theories, these laws everyone invoked but which I had begun to distrust as a result of my presumptuous mentor's rudeness. While not difficult, this did involve some effort. First I read Corneille's *Discours sur les trois unités*,⁴⁶ gathering from it what conditions were desired. But the reasons for them being desirable were *not* clear, and the worst part was that my confusion increased when I became acquainted with the quarrels about *Le Cid* and read the prefaces in which Corneille and Racine were obliged to defend themselves against the critics and the public. But here, at any rate, I did see clearly that no one knew what he wanted; that a splendidly effective play like *Le Cid* could, by order of an all-powerful cardinal, be unequivocally declared bad; and that Racine, the current idol of the French and now my own as well (for I had come to know him better when Juror von Olenschläger had us children play *Britannicus* and I was given the role of Nero), that even Racine, I say, in his own day could satisfy neither the theatergoers nor

the critics. All of this confused me more than ever, and when I had tormented myself at length with the previous century's disputes and theoretical twaddle, I poured out the baby with the bathwater. I was that much more resolute about rejecting all this rubbish, the more I seemed to detect that the authors themselves, the ones who wrote excellent plays, often missed the mark in accounting for their actions and in trying to defend, excuse, and justify themselves. So I made haste to return to the living entity before me, attended the theater much more zealously, and read more conscientiously and steadily. At this time I was persevering enough to work my way through all of Racine and Molière and the greater part of Corneille.

The king's lieutenant was still living in our house. His behavior had not changed at all, especially toward us; yet it was noticeable, and our cousin the interpreter was quick to point this out to us, that he no longer administered his office with the same cheerfulness and zeal as formerly, although he remained as upright and constant as before. His personality and conduct, which made him appear more Spanish than French; his moods, which occasionally did affect business matters; his unwillingness to bow to circumstances; and his irritable reaction to anything touching his person or character; all these together apparently sometimes brought him into conflict with his superiors. Besides, he was wounded in a duel arising from an incident in the theater, and, since he was also chief of police, there was criticism of the king's lieutenant for having engaged in a prohibited action himself. All of this, to repeat, may have contributed to making him live more to himself and perhaps pursue matters less vigorously in some instances.

Meanwhile, a considerable number of the paintings he had ordered were delivered to him. Count Thoranc spent his leisure hours contemplating them. He had them nailed to the walls in the aforementioned garret, strip after strip of varying widths next to each other and, since space was lacking, even over each other, and then he would have them taken down and rolled back up. Again and again he scrutinized these works and he repeatedly expressed his satisfaction with the details he deemed to have turned out best. However, he was also heard to utter the wish to see this or that done differently.

From this arose a new and altogether bizarre operation. Namely, since one painter was best at figures, another at middle grounds and distances, a third at trees, and a fourth at flowers, the count conceived the notion of trying to combine their talents in the pictures and thus produce perfect works. At once a start was made by having beautiful herds, for example, painted into finished landscapes. Because in some cases there was no suitable space for them, and a few sheep more or less made no difference to the animal painter, finally the widest landscape was too narrow. Now the figure painter was still required to add

shepherds and a few wayfarers. These again took each other's breathing space, as it were, and it is a wonder they did not all suffocate right out there in the open air. The results were always unpredictable, and, in the final analysis, always unsatisfactory. The painters grew ill-tempered. The original commissions had been profitable for them, but these retouchings were a loss, even though the count paid for them very handsomely as well. Despite all their efforts, no good effect was produced by these parts placed indiscriminately on the same picture by several artists, and in the end each of them believed his work was being ruined and obliterated by that of the others. As a result, they were on the verge of falling out with each other and becoming irreconcilable enemies. These alterations or, rather, additions, were executed in the aforementioned studio, where I stayed all alone with the artists. I amused myself by looking at their preliminary sketches, especially those of animals, and would select this or that individual or group and suggest it for the foreground or background. Sometimes, whether out of conviction or just to please me, they would adopt my suggestions.

To repeat, the participants in this undertaking were becoming very discouraged, especially Seekatz. This very hypochondriac and introspective man was, to be sure, the best of company among friends because of his incomparably high spirits; but when he was at work he wanted to be alone, uncommunicative, and a completely free agent. After having performed some hard tasks and having done them with all the industry and warmth of feeling he was capable of, he was now expected to make the trip from Darmstadt to Frankfurt repeatedly in order to change something in his own pictures, to add something to another's pictures, or even to assist while his pictures were being mottled by a third painter. His discontent increased, he decided to resist, and it required great efforts on our part to persuade this "cousin"—for he, too, had become one—to accede to the count's wishes. I still remember the boxes standing ready to be packed with all the paintings in the order in which they could be promptly installed at their destination by the paperhanger. I remember, I say, that only one last small, but unavoidable retouching was still needed; yet Seekatz could not be induced to come over. To be sure, as a final effort he had exerted himself to the utmost to paint door panels, from live models, depicting the four elements as children and adolescents, and he had taken the greatest pains not only with the figures but also the accessories. These had been delivered and paid for, and he had thought himself free of the matter forever; but now he was expected to come over again to add a few enlarging brush strokes to some pictures whose dimensions were a bit too small. He thought that someone else could do this just as well; he was ready to begin some new work; in short, he would not come. The time for dispatching was at hand, the fresh paint would have to dry,

inconvenient. The count, in despair, was about to send soldiers after him. We all wanted to be rid of the pictures at last, and so we finally seized on the expedient of having our cousin the interpreter get into a coach and fetch the recalcitrant man, along with his wife and children. Upon his arrival, the count received him amicably, looked after him well, and eventually dismissed him with many presents.

Once the pictures were gone, a great peace descended on our house. The garret room under the gable was cleaned and returned to me, and when my father saw the boxes being carried away he could not refrain from wishing the count might be sent along after them. However much the count's interests corresponded to his own; however gratified my father might feel about seeing his principle concerning the employment of living masters adhered to so productively by a wealthier man; and however he might flatter himself that his own collection had been the stimulus for providing good artists with considerable earnings in these difficult times; still his antipathy to the stranger who had invaded his house was so great that none of the man's actions could win his approval. Artists (he said) should indeed be kept busy, but not downgraded to painters of wallpaper. Moreover, one should be content with what they accomplished to the best of their belief and ability, and not always be carping and haggling, even though one might perhaps not be pleased with every detail. In short, despite the count's own broad-minded efforts, any friendship was entirely out of the question. My father only visited the studio when the count was at table, and I remember just one single time, when Seekatz had outdone himself and the whole household was drawn there by its desire to see the pictures, that my father and the count, on meeting, expressed a mutual pleasure in these artworks which they could not find in each other personally.

So, hardly had the boxes and cases left the house when the earlier negotiations to remove the count, subsequently interrupted, were taken up again. We strove to get justice by compiling a list of grievances; to get fair treatment by making pleas; and to get a favorable hearing by wielding influence—with the eventual result that the billeting authorities arrived at the following decision: the count should be relocated, and our house, in view of the fact that it had been burdened without relief, day and night, for several years, should in future be exempt from billeting. However, to create a plausible excuse for this, we should take in renters on the very same middle floor formerly occupied by the king's lieutenant and thus, as it were, make new billeting impossible. The count had no particular interest in the house after having been separated from his beloved pictures, and he hoped in any case to be recalled soon and transferred. Consequently he made no objection to being moved into other good lodgings and departed from us in peace and good will. Soon thereafter, he actually did leave town, and then received a series

of ever more important assignments; but we heard these were not to his liking. Meanwhile he had the pleasure of seeing the diligently collected paintings⁴⁷ safely installed in his brother's castle. He wrote a few times, sent measurements, and had various additional things painted by the more renowned artists. Eventually we heard nothing more about him, except that after several years people claimed to have heard that he had died in the West Indies,⁴⁸ as governor of one of the French colonies.

Book Four

However great an inconvenience the quartering of the French had been to us, we had grown too accustomed to it not to miss it, and the house seemed quite dead to us children. Nor were we destined to recover our complete privacy as a family. New renters were already bespoken, and after some sweeping and scouring, planing and polishing, and painting and patching, the house was again fully restored. Director of the Chancery Moritz and his family, very worthy friends of my parents, moved in. Not a born Frankfurter, but nevertheless a competent jurist and official, he took care of the legal affairs of several minor princes, counts, and lords. I never found him other than cheerful, affable, and diligently bent over his documents. To be sure, his quiet, gentle, kindly wife and children did not add to the sociability of our house, for they stayed to themselves. But a peace and quiet returned that we had not enjoyed for a long time. I was lodged again in my garret, where the ghosts of all those pictures sometimes hovered before me; but then I tried to banish them by working and studying.

Legation Councilor Moritz, brother to the chancery director, became a frequent visitor from now on. He was more the man of the world, with a distinguished appearance but an easy and pleasant manner. He too managed the affairs of various aristocratic personages and was associated with my father several times in connection with bankruptcies and imperial commissions. They respected each other greatly, and generally sided with the creditors. However, to their chagrin, they regularly were forced to see the majority of commissioners in such affairs won over to the debtors' side. The legation councilor gladly communicated his knowledge, was fond of mathematics, and, since he never used it in his present career, took pleasure in helping me to make progress in this subject. Consequently I was able to work out my architectural designs more precisely than before and to profit more from the instruction of a drawing master who now kept us occupied for an hour every day.

Actually, this good old man was just halfway an artist. He made us draw lines and bring them together, and from this were supposed to emerge eyes and noses, lips and ears, nay, eventually entire faces and heads. But in the process no thought was given either to natural or artistic form. He afflicted us for a while with this *qui pro quo* of the human figure and finally, thinking he was advancing us greatly, gave us the so-called "emotions" of Lebrun⁴⁹ to copy. But these caricatures brought us no progress, either. Next, we drifted over to landscapes,

to renditions of foliage, and to all those things which are practiced without method and without result in the usual course of instruction. In the end we resorted to exact imitations and to clean strokes, without concerning ourselves about the value or tastefulness of our subject.

Our father led the way in these efforts in exemplary fashion. He had never done any drawing, but instead of holding back, now that his children were practicing the art, he wanted age to give youth an example of how to go about it. Therefore he copied, with an English pencil on the finest Dutch paper, several heads by Piazzetta,⁵⁰ from that artist's well-known small-octavo plates. Not only did he observe the greatest precision of outline in doing this, but he also very exactly imitated the hatchings of the copperplate engravings, with a light hand—only all too gently, since in trying to avoid hardness he brought no proper contrast of light and shadow into his drawings. Yet they were quite delicate and uniform. He went so far with his persevering, tireless industry as to draw every item in the whole large collection, number by number, while we children skipped from one head to another, choosing only those that pleased us.

Around this time, the long-considered plan of giving us musical instruction was carried out, and the final impetus for that surely deserves mention. It was fully decided that we should learn to play the piano, but there had always been some disagreement about the choice of a teacher. At last, I once chanced to come into the room where one of my comrades was having his piano lesson, and I found his teacher to be a most delightful man. He had amusing names for all the fingers of both right and left hands, and with these he would most comically designate the one to be used. He named the black and white keys just as picturesquely, and the very notes themselves appeared in figurative disguise. Well, a motley company like this works together very pleasantly! Fingering and keeping time seem to become quite easy and clearly understandable, and everything proceeds most beautifully because the pupil has been put into the best of humor.

As soon as I was back at home I beseeched my parents to act in earnest now and give us this incomparable man as our piano teacher. They still raised a few objections and made inquiries, as a result of which they heard nothing bad about this teacher, but nothing especially good, either. Meanwhile I had told my sister about all the amusing names, and we could hardly wait for the lessons. We had our way, and the man was hired.

The first step was learning to read the notes, and when no fun proved to be connected with this, we comforted ourselves with the hope that the joking would begin when we got to the piano itself and the fingers were involved. But neither the keyboard nor the fingering seemed to

evoke any imagery. The black and white keys were left as dry as the notes had been, with their dots on and between the five lines, and there was not another syllable to be heard concerning a "thumbling" or a "pointerling" or a "goldfinger." Throughout this dry instruction the man's face remained as immobile as it had been mobile when he was making his dry jokes that other time. My sister reproached me most bitterly for having deceived her, for she truly believed I had invented the whole story. But I myself was dumfounded, and even though the man went about his work correctly enough, I learned little, for I still was waiting for the jokes to begin as before, and I kept renewing my sister's hopes from day to day. However, no jokes were forthcoming, and I never would have explained this mystery if it had not been solved for me by another coincidence.

During our lesson, one of my playfellows walked in, and suddenly the fountain of humor opened up all its spouts: the "thumblings" and "pointerlings," the "creepers" and "leapers," as he called the fingers, and the "fackers" and "gackers," the "fickers" and "giekers," as, for example, he termed the notes F and G, F-sharp and G-sharp, were suddenly in evidence again and seemed the most cunning little chaps. My young friend could not stop laughing and was delighted to learn so much in such a merry way. He swore to give his parents no peace until they hired this man as his teacher.

And so the avenue to two arts was opened for me at a rather early age, in keeping with the principles of modern educational theory, not because of any conviction that I had the innate talent to enable me to progress further in them, but merely on the chance of it. My father claimed that everyone must be taught to draw, which was why he especially honored Emperor Maximilian, who was supposed to have expressly commanded this. He kept me at it more earnestly than at music, which, on the other hand, he strongly recommended to my sister, and made her stay quite some time at the piano every day, in addition to the lessons.

The more I was required to learn in this way, the more I wanted to learn, and even my free time was spent in all sorts of curious pastimes. From my earliest years I had felt the urge to examine natural things. Sometimes it is interpreted as a tendency to cruelty when children, after having played for a while with such objects, handling them this way and that, end by mangling, dismembering, and mutilating them. Yet this is also how curiosity is manifested, that is, the desire to find out how such things are constructed and how they look inside. I remember that I, as a child, picked flowers apart to see how the petals fit into the calyx, and that I plucked birds to observe how the feathers are attached to the wings. Children ought not to be scolded for this,

since even natural scientists believe more is learnt from separating and severing than from uniting and joining, more from killing than from animating.

One day a mounted lodestone, sewed very prettily into a scarlet cloth, also had to suffer the effects of my passion for research. For a long time I had been content simply to gaze wide-eyed at its operation, because I was filled with great admiration for the mysterious virtue of it, its secret attractive force, which was not limited to the little iron bars that had been fitted to it, but could also be augmented so as to bear a heavier weight every day. Eventually, however, I thought that removing its outer cover might gain me some deeper insights. This done, I was none the wiser, for I learned nothing from the exposed armature. I removed this, too, and now held the bare stone in my hands. Although I tirelessly made experiments on it with filings and sewing needles, the only profit for my young mind in this was a variety of experiences. I was unable to reassemble the device completely, its parts went astray, and I had lost the distinguished phenomenon along with the apparatus.

I had no greater success with the construction of an electricity machine. A family friend, whose youth had been spent at a time when everyone's mind was preoccupied with electricity, frequently told us how he, as a boy, had wanted to own such a machine, had observed its main specifications, and then, with the aid of an old spinning wheel and a few medicine glasses, had produced some good effects. Since he related this gladly and often, adding general information about electricity, it seemed quite a plausible matter to us children, and for a long time we moiled about with an old spinning wheel and some medicine glasses, without being able to produce the slightest result. Nevertheless, we clung to our beliefs and were much delighted at fair time when, among other attractions such as magic tricks and juggling, we also saw an electricity machine performing its feats, which, like the magnetic ones, were really quite numerous for those times.

From day to day distrust of public education was increasing. People looked around for private tutors, and several families would join together in achieving this goal, since singly they could not afford the expense. But the children were seldom compatible, the young teachers did not have enough authority, there would be a series of annoying incidents, and these would lead to acrimonious separations. No wonder, then, that other arrangements of a more permanent and more advantageous kind were considered.

The idea of establishing boarding schools came up as a result of the general feeling that the French language had to be taught and transmitted as a living entity. My father had trained a young man who had become his servant, valet, secretary, and, in a word, gradually everything in one to him. His name was Pfeil, and he spoke French well and under-

stood it thoroughly. When he married, his patrons had to think of some livelihood for him, and they happened on the idea of establishing him in a boarding school. This could eventually be expanded into a little educational establishment where all the basics, and ultimately even Latin and Greek, would be taught. Frankfurt's wide-ranging connections made it likely that young Frenchmen and Englishmen would be entrusted to this school to learn German and receive other education. Pfeil, a man in his best years and marvelously energetic and active, directed the whole operation in a very laudable manner. Nothing was too much for him, and when he had to retain music masters for his pupils he took this opportunity to immerse himself in the study of music too. He practiced the piano so zealously that, although he had never touched a key before, he could quite soon play very smoothly and creditably. Apparently he had adopted my father's maxim to the effect that nothing encourages and stimulates young people more than to see an older person become a pupil again and, by dint of zeal and perseverance, at an age when it is very hard to acquire new skills, try to compete successfully with individuals who are younger and more favored by nature.

Pfeil's enthusiasm for playing the piano awoke his interest in the instruments themselves, and his wish to purchase the best ones put him in touch with Friederici in Gera, whose instruments were famous far and wide. He took a number of them on consignment, and thus had the pleasure of seeing not just one, but several grand pianos set up in his house, both to practice on and to entertain others.

This man's verve brought more musical activity into our house also. There may have been some points of contention, but my father remained on permanently good terms with him. A big Friederici piano was purchased for us too, though I scarcely touched it, preferring my upright. But it caused my sister that much more torment, because, in due honor of the new instrument, she had to spend still more time at daily practice. Alternately standing next to her through this were my father, as supervisor, and Pfeil, as the encouraging family friend.

We children were put to great inconvenience by a special hobby of my father's, namely the breeding of silkworms, and he had grand notions of how profitable the practice would be if more widespread. Some acquaintances in Hanau, where cultivation of the worms was carried on very meticulously, were his immediate inspiration. They sent him some eggs at the proper time, and as soon as the mulberry trees were sufficiently leafed out he let the eggs hatch, and tended the barely visible creatures most carefully. Tables, and boards on trestles, were set up in an attic room, in order to give them ample space and sustenance, for they grew quickly and, after shedding the last skin, were so ravenous that one could hardly procure enough leaves to feed them. Indeed, they

had to be fed day and night because it is essential that they not lack nourishment when the time comes for that great and amazing transformation to take place in them. Of course, as long as the weather was favorable, we could view this occupation as a pleasant entertainment; if a cold spell came, however, and the mulberry trees suffered, there was great distress. But it was still worse if rain fell in the last period, for these creatures cannot tolerate the slightest dampness. Therefore the wet leaves had to be carefully wiped off and dried; but this could not always be done so perfectly, and as a result (or perhaps from some other cause) various diseases would spread in the colony and carry off the poor creatures by the thousands. Their subsequent putrefaction raised a truly pestilential stench, and since sick and dead ones had to be separated from the healthy ones, and disposed of, in order to save a few, it was indeed an extremely onerous and disgusting business, one that gave us children many a bad hour.

One year, after having devoted the finest weeks of spring and summer to the tending of silkworms, we were required to assist our father at another task, which, while less complicated, became no less troublesome for us. This involved the views of Rome, which had hung on the walls of the old house for a number of years, set into black moldings above and below. They had become very yellowish from the light, dust, and smoke, as well as very unsightly with flyspecks. Such lack of cleanliness was inadmissible in the new house, but, on the other hand, these pictures had grown in my father's estimation because of the rather long time he had been absent from the regions portrayed in them. Such illustrations, at the start, serve to refresh and enliven impressions only recently received, and by comparison seem inferior and only a poor surrogate. Yet, as our memory of the original forms grows increasingly dim, then these replicas imperceptibly take their place, and they become as dear to us as the former were, and what we began by despising now has our appreciation and affection. This is the fate of all pictures, and particularly of portraits. No one ever seems pleased with the likeness of a person still among us, and yet how we prize every silhouette of an absent or actually deceased person.

Suffice it to say that my father, conscious of having neglected these engravings heretofore, wanted to see them restored as well as possible. It was known that this was possible by means of bleaching, and this operation, which is always hazardous for large sheets of paper, was now undertaken under rather unfavorable local conditions: The smoke-darkened engravings were moistened and set out in the sun on large boards, which were propped up against the roof in the gutters beneath some attic windows, and thus were exposed to many mishaps. The main concern in all this was never to let the paper dry out, but instead

to keep it constantly damp. My sister and I were given this responsibility, which demanded such unrelieved attention and made us grow so bored and impatient that what should have been a welcome period of idleness turned into the worst of torments. The task was accomplished notwithstanding, and the bookbinder, who backed each leaf with strong paper, did his best to even up and repair the edges that were torn here and there owing to our negligence. All the leaves were bound together in a volume and so were saved for the moment.

Lest we children be deprived of variety in our life and learning, just at this time an English language master turned up who pledged himself to teach English in four weeks to anyone not a complete novice in languages, and to advance him to the point where, with a little diligence, he could proceed on his own. He accepted a modest fee, and was indifferent about the number of pupils in his class. My father resolved on the spot to try him out, and took instruction from this efficient teacher along with me and my sister. The lessons were given conscientiously, and there was plenty of drilling. For the whole four weeks other studies were more or less neglected, and then the teacher parted from us, and we from him, with satisfaction. Since he stayed in town longer and found many clients, he would come back to us from time to time to observe and give further assistance, grateful that we had been among the first to have confidence in him, and proud that he could hold us up to others as models.

The result was that my father now had a new concern, namely, to keep English neatly in line with our other language studies. But I must confess that it grew ever more tiresome for me to base my exercises now on one grammar book or collection of examples, now on another, now on this author, and now on that, and thus to divide up my interest in the subject matter along with the class hours. Consequently I hit upon the idea of handling everything at once, and invented a novel about six or seven siblings who are separated from each other and scattered over the world, but take turns writing each other news about their situations and feelings. The eldest brother reported, in good German, on the sights and events of his trip. The sister, in a girlish style with short sentences and many dots (more or less in the way *Siegwart* was later written⁵¹) replied first to him, then to the others and told all there was to tell either about domestic matters or her affairs of the heart. One brother was studying theology and wrote a very formal Latin, sometimes adding a Greek postscript. Another, employed in Hamburg as an errand boy, was of course assigned the English correspondence, while a younger one, who was sojourning in Marseilles, got the French. For the Italian there was a musician on his first foray into the world, and the youngest, a sort of impudent family pet, had resorted to Jewish

German because the other languages were already taken. His dreadful ciphers were the despair of the others, but his parents were amused by his clever idea.

There had to be some content for this curious form, and so I studied the geography of the regions where my fictitious personages were living, but I supplemented those dry local facts by inventing various items of human interest related in some way to the characters and occupations of these individuals. As a result, my exercise books grew much more voluminous, my father was better satisfied, and I perceived sooner what was missing in my own store of knowledge and skills.

Once projects of this nature are actually launched they can become endless and boundless, and that was the case here too. In attempting to master that grotesque Jewish German, and to learn to write it as well as I could read it, I soon felt my lack of a knowledge of Hebrew, which alone was the source of and fairly sure key to the corrupt and distorted modern tongue. Therefore I advised my father of the necessity of my learning Hebrew, and gave him no peace until he consented. And I had still another, higher purpose in mind: I heard it universally said that a knowledge of the original languages was needed for an understanding of the Old Testament, just as for the New. The latter I could read quite easily, because after church we were required to recite, translate, and, to some extent, expound the so-called gospels and epistles, so that even Sunday would not be without its schoolwork. I now planned to do likewise with the Old Testament, whose unique qualities had always strongly appealed to me.

My father, who did not like doing things halfway, decided to request the rector of our preparatory school, Doctor Albrecht,⁵² to give me weekly private lessons until I grasped the essentials of this very simple language. His hope was that Hebrew could be managed, if not as quickly as English, at any rate in twice the time.

Rector Albrecht was one of the oddest-looking people imaginable: short, thickset rather than fat, ill-shaped though not deformed—in brief, Aesop in a periwig and cassock. He contorted his more than seventy-year-old face into a permanent sarcastic smile; yet his eyes remained wide open and, though bloodshot, they were always shining with intelligence. He lived in the old Franciscan monastery, which housed the preparatory school. I had occasionally visited him already in my childhood, accompanying my parents, and had scampered in mixed horror and delight through the long dark passageways and the reception rooms, formerly chapels, of this cut-up place with its many stairways and corners. He never saw me without putting me through an examination, but he was not tiresome about it, and would praise and encourage me. One day, after the public examination, when the students were being promoted, he saw me standing as an outside spectator near his lectern,

where he was distributing silver *praemia virtutis et diligentiae*.³³ Apparently I was casting longing glances at the little pouch from which he drew the medals, for he beckoned to me, came down a step, and handed me one of the silver pieces. My joy was great, even though other people thought it quite improper to grant such a gift to a non-pupil. But the good old man cared little for that, since he played the eccentric in any case, and in a conspicuous way indeed. He had an excellent reputation as an educator and understood his trade, although his age to some extent prevented him from plying it. More than by his own frailty, he felt he was encumbered by external circumstances: I had previous knowledge that he was satisfied neither with the consistory, nor the school directors, nor the clergymen, nor the teachers. He had an innate talent for noticing mistakes and shortcomings, and for satire, and he gave it free rein in both his annual school-program essays and his public speeches. Lucian was almost the only author he read and esteemed, and thus everything he wrote and said was seasoned with caustic ingredients.

Fortunately for those who displeased him, his attacks were never direct, and the faults he meant to censure were only hinted at with references, allusions, classical quotations, and Bible passages. Moreover, his oral delivery (for he always read his speeches) was unpleasant, incomprehensible, and, as if that were not enough, subject sometimes to interruption by a cough, more frequently by a hollow belly laugh that introduced and accompanied the mordant passages. Yet I found this strange man mild and docile when I started taking lessons from him. I went to him daily at six o'clock in the evening, always feeling a secret glow of pleasure when the door with the bell closed behind me and I began to walk down the long, gloomy cloister. We sat at an oilcloth-covered table in his library, and a worn copy of Lucian never left his side.

All of his kindness notwithstanding, I did not achieve my purpose without paying my initiation fee, for my teacher could not refrain from asking me, with certain mocking comments, why I really wanted to study Hebrew. I concealed my interest in Jewish-German from him and talked about understanding the original text better. He smiled at that and said it was enough for me if I just learned to read it. This secretly annoyed me, and I concentrated hard when it came to the alphabet. I found that it corresponded approximately to the Greek alphabet, with intelligible forms, and with names mostly not unfamiliar to me. I grasped and memorized all of this very swiftly and thought that now it was time for me to begin reading. I was well aware that this was done from right to left. Now, however, there suddenly emerged a new host of little signs and letters, of dots and tiny dashes of all descriptions, which were said to be the real designations for vowels—

which was all the more amazing to me since the larger alphabet obviously contained some of the vowels already, and seemed to have concealed the rest under false designations. I was also taught that, as long as the Jewish nation had flourished, it had made do with those first signs and knew no other way of reading and writing. I would have been only too glad to proceed by this ancient, and seemingly more convenient, method, but my old teacher declared rather sternly that one was obliged to follow the preferred rules that had now been drawn up. It would (he said) be a most difficult task to read without the help of these dots and dashes, and only the most expert scholars would be equal to it. So I had to resign myself to becoming familiar with these little marks too, and it all grew more confusing to me than ever. Next I was told that some of the first, larger, original signs had in turn forfeited their value, so that the little newer ones would not be standing there uselessly. Then again, they were said to indicate sometimes a slight aspiration, sometimes a fairly hard guttural sound, or to serve sometimes as mere supports and buttresses. Finally, however, just when I thought I had it all well in mind, several of the rascals, both big and small, were pensioned off! And so there was always a great deal of work for the eye to do and very little for the lips.

Now, since it was a question of stammering out some perfectly familiar material in this unfamiliar gibberish of a language, and of being told, to boot, that I would probably never master certain of the nasal and guttural sounds, I more or less lost interest in the whole affair and childishly amused myself with the odd names of these myriad signs. I saw emperors, kings, and nobles among them, in dominating roles as accents, and this offered me no little entertainment. But these superficial games soon lost their charm too. On the other hand, I found consolation in the fact that all my reading, translating, drilling, and memorizing were making the Book's contents that much more vivid for me, and this was the enlightenment I really desired to obtain from my old gentleman. Even beforehand I had been very much struck by the discrepancies between tradition and what is real and possible, and more than once I had embarrassed my private tutors with my questions about the sun standing still in Gibeon and the moon doing likewise in the Vale of Ajalon,⁵⁴ not to mention some other improbabilities and incongruities. This was all stirred up again now as in my attempt to master Hebrew I devoted my attention exclusively to the Old Testament and was no longer studying it in Luther's translation but in Sebastian Schmid's literal Latin version printed alongside the original text, which my father had bought for me at once.⁵⁵ At this juncture, I am sorry to say, our lessons began to deteriorate as far as language exercises were concerned. Reading, analyzing, grammar, writing and reciting vocables seldom took up even half an hour, for I would immediately focus at-

tention on the meaning of the thing and, although we were still engrossed in Genesis, would discuss various matters I had in mind that pertained to later books. At first the good old man tried to hold me back from such digressions, but eventually he appeared to find them entertaining too. Characteristically, he could not stop coughing and laughing, but I did not leave off importuning him, however much he avoided giving me any information that might have compromised him. Indeed, I was more intent on expressing my doubts than on having them resolved, and since his behavior seemed to encourage me in this, I grew ever more eager and bold. However, I got nothing more out of him than one belly laugh after the other, as he shouted: "You silly fellow! You silly boy!"

Nevertheless, my childish eagerness to crisscross the Bible in all directions apparently seemed fairly serious to him, and worthy of some assistance. After a while, therefore, he referred me to the German version of the great English work on the Bible, with its understandable and intelligent explanations of difficult and doubtful passages, which was available in his library. The original text, thanks to the great efforts of the German theologians, had been improved through translation. The varying opinions were cited and then an attempt was made to reconcile them in a way that allowed the Book's dignity, the fundamentals of religion, and human reason to exist next to each other on more or less equal terms. He would point to that repository whenever, toward the end of the lesson, I would register my customary doubts. I would fetch a volume, he would bid me read while he paged through his Lucian, and when I made my comments about the Bible his only answer to my sagacity was the usual laughter. In the long summer days he would let me sit reading to my heart's content, sometimes in solitude; but some time passed before he permitted me to take home one volume at a time.

A person may turn in any direction he pleases, and undertake anything whatever, yet he will always return to the path that nature has once and for all laid out for him. That was the case with me too in the present instance. My efforts with the language and content of the Holy Scriptures resulted at last in the awakening of my imagination to a more vivid conception of that beautiful and celebrated land along with its surroundings and neighborhood, as well as of the peoples and events that have made this patch of earth glorious for millenia.

This little area was to see the origin and development of the human race; from it would come down to us the first and only account of early history. And this was the locality, both so simple and intelligible, and so diverse and suited to the most remarkable migrations and settlements, that was to beguile our imagination. Here a small, extremely pleasant space between four named rivers was selected for youthful man out of

the whole habitable world. Here he was to develop his first capabilities, and here, simultaneously, he was to meet a fate that would be passed on to his whole progeny, namely, losing his peace in the pursuit of knowledge. Paradise was forfeited; human beings multiplied and grew more evil; the Elohim, not yet inured to the wickedness of the race, lost patience and annihilated it root and branch. Only a few were saved from the universal flood, and no sooner had the dreadful deluge subsided than again the familiar native soil greeted the eyes of the grateful survivors. Two of the four rivers, the Euphrates and the Tigris, were still flowing in their beds. The former kept its original name; the latter appeared to be named by its course. After such a great upheaval one could hardly expect to find more definite traces of Paradise. The renewed human race set out from thence for the second time and found every sort of opportunity to employ and support itself, but usually chose to gather great herds of domesticated animals and rove with them in all directions.

This mode of life, along with the multiplication of tribes, soon forced the people to separate. They could not immediately accept the permanent loss of their relatives and friends, and therefore conceived the idea of building a high tower that would point the way back home from a long distance. But this experiment was no more successful than man's original striving. They were not destined to be both happy and wise, or numerous and united. The Elohim sowed confusion among them, construction halted, the people dispersed, and while the world became populated, it was no longer unified.

Yet our sympathetic glance remains fastened on these regions. Eventually another patriarch emerges there who succeeds in imprinting a definite character on his progeny and thus unites them forever into a great nation that persists despite all the changes in its fortune and dwelling place.

Not without divine guidance, Abraham wanders westward, away from the Euphrates. The desert is no great barrier in the path of his expedition. He reaches the Jordan, crosses it, and settles in the lovely regions of southern Palestine. This land had already been taken possession of and was quite well populated. Its mountains, not very high but rocky and infertile, are cleft by many arable valleys well supplied with water. Towns, villages, individual settlements lie spread out over the slopes and the floor of the large valley whose waters join to form the Jordan. So populated, so tilled is the land, but the world is still big enough, and the people are not sufficiently careful, needy, or active to lay hands on all their surroundings immediately. In the great spaces left between their properties the grazing herds can move comfortably to and fro. It is in such places that Abraham stops, his brother Lot⁵⁶ with him; but

they cannot stay for long in such localities. The very make-up of the land, with its fluctuating population and ever inadequate production, results in a sudden famine, and the newcomer suffers alongside the native, whose own sustenance is curtailed by the chance presence of the former. The two Chaldean brothers move to Egypt, and so the scene is marked out for us on which for several thousand years the most significant events in the world will take place. From the Tigris to the Euphrates, from the Euphrates to the Nile we behold a populated earth, and in this area we see our friend, a man beloved by the gods and already esteemed by us, roaming back and forth with goods and herds that he soon increases most abundantly. The brothers return to Canaan, but the experience of adversity has taught them a lesson, and they decide to separate. To be sure, both linger in the southern part, but while Abraham stays at Hebron toward the Grove of Mamre, Lot moves to the Vale of Siddim. The latter, if we can be bold enough to imagine a subterranean outlet to the Jordan, and dry land where the present lake of asphalt lies, can and must seem to us a second Paradise, all the more so since the inhabitants and their neighbors, being notorious as voluptuaries and sinners, suggest to us an easy and luxurious life. Lot dwells among them, yet stays apart.

But Hebron and Mamre impress us as the important places, because there the Lord speaks with Abraham and promises him all the land in four directions, as far as the eye can see. Then we are compelled to divert our glances again from these quiet precincts, from these pastoral people who associate with celestial beings, entertain them as guests, and hold frequent dialogues with them—away to the east, where we must consider conditions in the adjacent world, which are apparently, on the whole, much like the individual ones in Canaan.

Families stay together. They form a unit, and the customs of these tribes are determined by the locality they have appropriated or are appropriating. On the mountains that send their waters down to the Tigris we find warlike people who, even at this early time, foreshadow the world conquerors and world rulers to come. In a campaign of vast proportions for those days they give a foretaste of the great exploits of the future. Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, mightily influences his allies. He has ruled for a long time, and for as much as twelve years before Abraham's arrival in Canaan he has been exacting tribute from the nations up to the Jordan: the latter have finally revolted, and the allies are arming themselves for war. Unexpectedly, we find them on the road that was probably also Abraham's way to Canaan. The nations on the left and lower side of the Jordan are subdued. Chedorlaomer directs his expedition southwards to the desert peoples, then, turning northwards, he smites the Amalekites. When he has also overcome the

Amorites, he reaches Canaan, attacks the kings ruling the Vale of Siddim, smites and disperses them, and moves upstream along the Jordan, with great booty, intending to proceed in triumph up toward Lebanon.

Among the plundered captives who have been dragged off along with their possessions is also Lot, who has to share the fate of the land where he is a guest. Abraham hears about it, and suddenly we see this patriarch in the role of warrior and hero. He quickly assembles his servants, divides them into troops, attacks the cumbersome booty train, confounds the victors, who have not expected any more enemies at their back, and returns with his brother and the latter's possessions, as well as many possessions of the conquered kings. Through this brief campaign Abraham takes title, as it were, to the country. Its inhabitants see him as their defender, their savior, and because of his unselfishness, as their king. The kings of the valley gratefully receive him and he is blessed by Melchisedek, the priest-king.

Now the prophecies about infinite progeny are repeated, nay, extended more and more. The entire territory between the waters of the Euphrates and the river of Egypt is promised to him; but as far as direct heirs are concerned, things still do not look encouraging. He is eighty years old and has no son. Sarah has less trust in the gods than he, and grows impatient. In accord with Oriental custom, she wants issue by her maid. But hardly is Hagar entrusted to the master, hardly is there hope of having a son, when discord arises in the family. The wife treats her own protégée Hagar so badly that the latter flees, hoping to find better conditions in another tribe. She does come back, but not without a command from Heaven, and Ishmael is born.

Abraham is now ninety-nine years old, and still the promises of numerous progeny are repeated over and over, until at last both spouses find them ridiculous. Nevertheless, Sarah finally becomes pregnant and bears a son, who receives the name Isaac.

History to a great extent is based on the legitimate reproduction of the human race. The most significant world events have to be traced back to the secret doings of families, and so the marriages of the patriarchs also occasion special observations. It seems as if the divinities who elected to guide the destiny of mankind wanted to show them as prototypes, as it were, of every kind of marital event. Abraham, having lived for so many years in a childless marriage with a beautiful woman who had had many suitors, in his hundredth year finds himself the spouse of two women and the father of two sons; and simultaneously the peace of his house is shattered. Two women next to each other, and two sons, of two mothers, against each other cannot possibly be compatible. The part less favored by law, custom, and opinion must yield. Abraham must sacrifice his affection for Hagar and Ishmael; both are dismissed, and Hagar is now required against her will to set out on

a path she had once followed in voluntary flight. At first it seems the ruination of herself and her child, but the Angel of the Lord, who earlier had sent her back, saves her once again, so that Ishmael, too, may spawn a great nation, and so that the unlikeliest of all promises may be fulfilled superabundantly.

Two aged parents and a single, late-born son—in such circumstances, domestic peace and earthly bliss might finally be expected! By no means. The powers above are still preparing the patriarch's hardest test of all. But we cannot speak of this without first making several observations.

If a natural, universal religion was to emerge and a particular, revealed religion develop from it, then probably the lands most suitable for that were the ones which have engaged our imagination up to now, with their customs and type of people. At any rate, nowhere else in the world do we find the emergence of anything similarly favorable and promising. Even natural religion, assuming that it arises earlier in the human spirit, must be predicated on considerable delicacy of sentiment, for it involves the belief in a universal Providence directing the whole world order. A particular religion, that is, one revealed by the gods to this or that nation, is associated with belief in a particular Providence promised by the Divine Being to certain favored men, families, tribes, and nations. This religion scarcely seems developed from within human beings. It requires transmittal, tradition, and surety from time immemorial.

Therefore it is well that Israelite tradition portrays the original men who trust in this special Providence as heroes of faith: they blindly obey each and every command of that high Being on whom they acknowledge dependence, just as they never doubt, or tire of waiting for, the fulfillment of His promises, however tardy.

Not only is every revealed religion based on the concept that the gods may favor one person over another, it also primarily originates from the separation of modes of life. The first human beings were soon divided by occupation, even though they viewed each other as close relatives. The hunter was the freest of all, and out of him developed the warrior and ruler. The tillers of the fields devoted themselves to the earth, erected dwellings and barns to protect their gains, and began to feel pride in the permanence and security provided by their livelihood. As for the herdsman, he seemed to have been granted the widest range and limitless possessions. The herds multiplied endlessly, and the grazing grounds spread out in all directions. From the start, these three estates seem to have regarded each other with vexation and scorn, and since the herdsman was an abomination to the townsman, the two were soon separated. The huntsmen disappear from our view into the mountains, and only reappear later as conquerors.

The patriarchs were herdsmen. The life they lived on the sea of deserts and pastures lent breadth and freedom to their ideas, while the vaulted sky under which they dwelt, with all its stars at night, gave sublimity to their feelings. More than the active, skillful hunter, more than the secure, careful, well-housed farmer, they needed the steadfast belief that a god walked beside them, that he visited them, took an interest in them, and led and saved them.

One more observation is necessary before we proceed to the subsequent historical developments. As humane, beautiful, and bright as the religion of the patriarchs appears to be, it is nevertheless marked with the traits of a savagery and cruelty beyond which man can progress, or into which he can sink down again.

It is natural to appease hatred with the blood and death of a vanquished foe, and it can easily be imagined that peace was often concluded right on the battlefield, between the rows of the slain. It follows from the foregoing that the slaughter of animals would also be considered a means of sealing alliances; and likewise there is nothing astonishing about the notion that the gods could be attracted, appeased, and won over by something slain, for they were, after all, considered to be partisan, either adversaries or allies. If, however, we pause at the sacrifices and contemplate the method of offering them in those primitive times, we find a curious, and for us most repellent, custom, which probably also originated in war, namely this: regardless of how many animals were sacrificed, and of whatever kind, they all had to be chopped in half and separated into two rows, while the persons who wished to conclude a pact with the divinity stood in the corridor between.

Yet another terrible feature wondrously and weirdly marks that lovely world, namely the obligatory death of anything consecrated or pledged—presumably another warlike custom carried over into peacetime. The inhabitants of a town who defend themselves vigorously are threatened with that vow; the town falls, whether taken by storm or otherwise; no one is left alive, certainly not any man; and sometimes the women and children, and even the livestock, suffer the same fate. Similarly, offerings are more or less definitely promised to the gods, superstitiously and in too great haste, and so persons preferably spared, nay, even the very closest relatives—a man's own children—are doomed to bleed as the sacrificial victims of such madness.

So barbaric a form of worship could not rise up in Abraham's gentle, truly patriarchal character. But the gods, to test us, sometimes assume the very attitudes that men are inclined to impute to them, and now they order him to do a monstrous thing. He is to sacrifice his son as a pledge for the new covenant, and, if all goes according to ancient custom, must not only slaughter and burn him, but cut him in two pieces

and then await a new promise from the kindly gods while standing between the smoking entrails. Without hesitation, blindly, Abraham sets about obeying the command. But his mere willingness satisfies the gods. Now Abraham's trials are over, for how could they be further intensified? But Sarah dies, and Abraham uses this as an opportunity to take symbolical possession of Canaan. He needs a grave, and so for the first time looks about for property on this earth. The double cave over against the Grove of Mamre may have been selected by him beforehand. He now buys it along with an adjacent field, and the legal formalities observed by him in doing so show how important the possession is to him. It was indeed important, perhaps more so than he himself could imagine, for he, his sons, and his grandsons were to rest in this very spot, and thus a direct claim to the whole country, as well as the everlasting desire of his progeny to gather in it, were most properly founded.

From now on there is a succession of various family scenes. Abraham still holds strictly aloof from the native residents, and whereas Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian woman, has married a daughter of Egypt, Isaac is to wed a woman of his own blood, equal to him in rank.

Abraham sends Eliezer to the relatives he has left behind in Mesopotamia. The shrewd servant arrives incognito, and, so as to bring home the right bride, tests the maidens at the well on their willingness to serve. He requests a drink for himself, but Rebecca, without being asked, waters his camels also. He bestows a gift on her and sues for her hand, which is not refused. So he conducts her into the house of his lord and she is married to Isaac. Here again, there is a long wait for some progeny. Only after an ordeal of several years is Rebecca blessed, but the same conflict that arose between two mothers in Abraham's marriage here springs from *one*. Two boys of opposite temperament begin their struggle already in their mother's womb. They emerge. The elder is lively and strong, the younger sensitive and intelligent; the former becomes the father's favorite, the latter the mother's. Their struggle for precedence begins at birth and goes on and on. Esau is calm and indifferent about destiny's gift of primogeniture, while Jacob never forgets that his brother crowded him out. Alert for every opportunity to gain the desired advantage, he bargains his brother's birthright from him and cheats him out of his father's blessing. Esau is enraged and swears to kill his brother, and Jacob flees, deciding to try his luck in the land of his forebears.

Now there appears, for the first time in this noble-minded family, a person with no scruples about using tricks and cunning to attain advantages denied him by nature and circumstances. It has been often enough noted and stated that the Holy Scriptures by no means intend us to take the patriarchs and other favorites of God as models of virtue.

They too are human beings of the most varied character, with many defects and frailties. However, the men after God's own heart dare not lack one chief quality, namely the firm belief that God has a special interest in them and theirs.

The universal, natural religion really requires no faith, since no one can escape the conviction that a great productive, regulating, and guiding Essence is concealed, as it were, behind nature, so as to come within our grasp. Even if a person sometimes lets loose of this thread that guides him through life, he can immediately take it up again anywhere. The situation is quite different with the individual religion which proclaims to us that this great Essence has definite preferences and will espouse the cause of a single person, tribe, nation, or territory. This kind of religion is based on faith, which must be unshakable if it is not to be destroyed immediately and totally. The slightest doubt is fatal to such a religion. One can return to a conviction, but not to faith. This is the reason for the constant testing and the delay in fulfilling repeated promises: they brilliantly highlight the capacity of those forefathers for faith.

Jacob sets out on his expedition in this same faith. He may not have won our hearts through his cunning and deceit, but he does win them by his constant, steadfast love for Rachel, whom he woos spontaneously, by himself, as Eliezer had wooed Rebecca for his father. The promise of an innumerable nation will first come perfectly true in him: he will see many sons gathered around him, but they and their mothers will also cause him many a heartache.

He serves seven years for his beloved, without faltering or growing impatient. His father-in-law, who is equally cunning and, like him, inclined to feel that the end justifies any means, deceives him, paying him back for what he did to his brother: Jacob finds himself embracing a wife he does not love. True, after a short time Laban pacifies him by giving him his beloved also, but only on condition that he serve seven more years. And thus vexation breeds vexation. The unloved wife is fertile, the beloved one bears no children. Like Sarah, she wants to become a mother through her maid, but the other wife begrudges her even this advantage. She too supplies her husband with a maid, and now the good patriarch is the most harassed man in the world: four wives, children from three of them, but none from the one he loves! Finally she too is blessed, and Joseph is born, the late fruit of a most passionate love. Jacob's fourteen years of service are over, but Laban does not want to lose a man who is his principal, his truest servant. They agree on new conditions and divide up the herds. Laban keeps the white animals, which are the most numerous, while Jacob has to be content with the spotted ones, the residue, as it were. Even so, he is able to retain his advantage, and, just as he won primogeniture

with a simple dish of food, and the paternal blessing through a disguise, so now he knows how to use art and sympathy to obtain the best and biggest part of the herd for himself and shows himself also in this respect as truly worthy of becoming the progenitor of the people of Israel and a model for his descendants. Laban and his men fail to perceive the trick, but not its success. There is a quarrel, Jacob flees with all his family and possessions, and partly by luck, partly through cunning, he escapes the pursuing Laban. Now Rachel is to give him one more son, but dies in childbirth. She is survived by Benjamin, the child of sorrow. However, still greater sorrow awaits the patriarch with the apparent loss of his son Joseph.

Someone might wish to ask why I am retelling these stories in such detail, when they are so universally known and have been repeated and analyzed so often. This person would perhaps accept the answer that I know no other way of demonstrating my ability to concentrate my mind and feelings on one subject and let it quietly affect me, despite my haphazard life and fragmentary education. It is also my only way of describing the peace that enveloped me, however wild and strange the happenings outside. Whenever my constantly active imagination (of which that fairy tale can serve as evidence) led me hither and thither, and whenever the classical mixture of fable and history, mythology and religion, threatened to confuse me, I would gladly flee for refuge to those oriental regions. I would steep myself in the first books of Moses, and there, amidst the widespread tribes of herdsmen, find myself both in the greatest solitude and the greatest company.

Before these family scenes blend into a history of the Israelite nation, they show us one final figure, who is especially attractive to hopeful, imaginative youth: Joseph, child of the most passionate conjugal love. He strikes us as being calm and clear, and he prophesies distinctions for himself that will elevate him above his family. Plunged into misfortune by his brothers, he remains steadfast and upright in slavery, resists the most perilous temptations, saves himself by soothsaying, and is raised to merited high honors. First he shows himself helpful and useful to a great kingdom, then to his own family. He resembles his great-grandfather Abraham in calmness and grandeur, his grandfather Isaac in quietness and devotion. The business sense he has inherited from his father is now exercised by him on a large scale: It is no longer a question of appropriating a father-in-law's herds but of knowing how to acquire nations, with all their possessions, for a king. This artless tale is extremely charming, but it seems too short and one feels a call to elaborate on it.

The Germans were no longer strangers to such elaborations on characters and events only described in outline in the Bible. Klopstock had

invested the personages of the Old and New Testament with a tenderness and sensitivity that greatly appealed to the boy and many of his contemporaries. Little or nothing of Bodmer's work in this style⁵⁷ fell into my hands, but Moser's *Daniel in the Lions' Den* made a deep impression on my young mind. In this book, an upright official at court must undergo many afflictions on his way to achieving high honors, and although at first it seems possible that piety will be his undoing, this is what acts as his shield and weapon from start to finish. I had long been wanting to treat the story of Joseph, but the proper form for it eluded me, mainly because I was unskilled in any meter suitable for such a work. But then I decided on prose as a very acceptable medium and set about the adaptation with all my might. I tried to differentiate and enlarge upon the characters and to make a new, independent work out of the old story by inserting intermediate actions and episodes. I did not reflect—and indeed no youngster can—that substance was also required, and that this can only come from our perception of actual experience. Suffice it to say that I visualized all the events down to the last detail and narrated them to myself in very exact order.

The work was greatly facilitated by a circumstance that threatened to make this piece, and my authorship generally, very voluminous. A talented young man who unfortunately had lost his mind through overwork and ambition was residing in my father's house as a ward. He lived in peace with our family, and was quiet and introverted. As long as no one disturbed his routine he was content and agreeable. He had kept his academic notebooks very conscientiously and had developed a rapid, legible handwriting. Writing was his favorite occupation, and he liked to be given something to copy; but he was happiest when someone dictated to him, because then he felt transported back to his happy university years. My father could not write swiftly and his German script was small and shaky; therefore nothing could have pleased him more, and he regularly dictated several hours a day to this young man in the discharge of his own and others' business. I found it no less convenient, between times, to have someone else's hand capture on paper everything that flitted through my head, and this easy way of catching and preserving fostered my talent for invention and imitation.

Never before had I undertaken so large a work as that Biblical epic in prose. Things were fairly quiet just then, so that nothing diverted my attention from Palestine and Egypt. So my manuscript expanded daily, helped by the fact that the narrative, which I recited for myself, as it were into thin air, kept appearing on paper, segment after segment, and only a few pages occasionally needed to be rewritten.

To my own amazement the work actually did come into being, and when it was finished I reflected on the fact that I had some poems left over from earlier years which still seemed to have some merit. If these

were written down and collected under the same cover with "Joseph" they would make a very pretty quarto volume which could be entitled "Miscellaneous Poems." This idea appealed to me greatly, for I secretly saw an opportunity here to imitate some well-known, famous authors. I had composed a goodly number of so-called "Anacreontic" poems, turning them out very quickly thanks to the easy meter and light content. But these were unrhymed, and so I could really not include them, for I wanted above all to present my father with something pleasing to him. Much more appropriate here, I thought, would be the religious odes I had very zealously attempted in imitation of Elias Schlegel's "Last Judgment."⁵⁸ One written for the festival commemorating Christ's descent into Hell had been much acclaimed by my parents and friends, and still had the good fortune of pleasing me after several years. I industriously studied the so-called "texts" of the Sunday church concerts, which were always available in print. Of course they were very inferior, and I could certainly believe that the several texts I had composed in the prescribed way equally deserved to be set to music and performed for the edification of the congregation. These, and a few similar things, I had copied in my own hand more than a year before, because this private exercise freed me from the precepts of the writing master. Now I revised all of this and put it in good order, and that young writing fanatic did not need much persuasion to produce a clean copy. I hastened to the bookbinder with this, and when I shortly afterwards handed the neat volume to my father he was greatly pleased and encouraged me to prepare a quarto like this every year. He said this with all the more conviction since I had accomplished the whole thing in my so-called "leisure hours."

One other circumstance strengthened my inclination toward these theological, or rather, Biblical studies. The senior of the Ecclesiastical Ministry, Johann Philipp Fresenius, had died.⁵⁹ Although this gentle man, with his fine, pleasing appearance, was respected both by his congregation and the whole town as an exemplary clergyman and good preacher, still he did not have the best reputation among the separatist "Pious Ones" because he had spoken against the Moravian sect. On the other hand, he had won fame and practically sainthood by his conversion of a mortally wounded, free-thinking general. However, his successor Plitt, a tall, handsome, dignified man (formerly a professor at Marburg⁶⁰) had come away from his lecture hall more with a gift for instruction than for edification, and he immediately announced something like a course in religion, to which he would devote his sermons with a certain methodical continuity. Even before this, since I had to attend church anyway, I had noted the construction of the sermons and occasionally could show off by reciting one fairly completely. Since there was so much discussion now, pro and contra, in the congregation

about the new senior, and many people expressed their doubts about the announced didactic sermons, I resolved to copy these down with all care. I succeeded with it all the more easily since, while making my more modest attempts, I had found a seat which was well concealed but convenient for hearing. I was very attentive and quick. As soon as he said "Amen," I hurried away from church and spent a few hours rapidly dictating from memory and my notes, so that I might hand over the written sermon before we sat down at table. My father was overjoyed at the success of this venture, and our good family friend, who just then came in to eat, had to share his delight. This man greatly approved of me anyway because I was so steeped in his *Messiah* that, when I visited him, as I frequently did to fetch wax seals for my heraldic collection, I could recite long passages for him and so bring tears to his eyes.

I continued this work the next Sunday with equal zeal, and was entertained just by the mechanics of it, without a thought about what I was writing and preserving. My efforts went on more or less unabated for the first quarter year. At last, however, when I judged that I was neither getting any special enlightenment concerning the Bible itself, nor any more liberal view of dogma, I felt I was paying too high a price for this small satisfaction to my vanity, and I could not apply myself to the work with the same enthusiasm. The sermons, once so voluminous, grew thinner and thinner, and I would have eventually abandoned the project completely if my father, who liked to see things finished, had not used kind words and promises to encourage me to persevere until the last Sunday in Trinity. But at the end I scarcely recorded more than the text, the proposition, and the arrangement of parts, on small pieces of paper.

My father was particularly obstinate on the subject of completion. Something once undertaken had to be finished, even if in the meantime the inconvenient, tedious, vexatious, nay, useless aspects of the project had clearly revealed themselves. It seemed as though he considered completion to be the only goal, perseverance the only virtue. Had we begun, in the long winter evenings, to read a book aloud within the family circle, then we also had to finish it, even though it drove us all to distraction and he might sometimes be the first to start yawning. I still remember one such winter, when we had to work our way through Bower's *History of the Popes*.⁶¹ We were in a dreadful situation, for those ecclesiastical affairs include little or nothing that appeals to children and young people. Yet in spite of all my inattentiveness and antipathy, so much of that reading stayed with me that in later years I was able to use it in many connections.

Amid all these extraneous activities and tasks, which followed each other in such rapid succession that we had no time to reflect whether

they were admissible and profitable, my father did not lose sight of his chief goal. He was trying to direct my memory and my talent for grasping and associating things toward juristic subjects, and therefore he placed a little book by Hoppe⁶² in my hands, a sort of catechism adapted to the form and contents of the *Institutions*. I soon memorized the questions and answers and could act the catechist as well as the catechumen. Because, at that time, one of the main exercises in religious instruction was learning to find passages in the Bible with lightning speed, an equal familiarity with the *Corpus Juris*⁶³ was also considered necessary, and soon I was perfectly well versed in it as well. My father wanted to proceed further, and we took up the "Little Struve."⁶⁴ But here my progress was not as fast. The form of this book did not facilitate a beginner's efforts at helping himself, and my father's approach to instruction was not liberal enough to appeal to me.

Not only the war-time conditions of the last several years but also civil life itself and the stories and novels we read made it only too clear to us that in many cases the law is silent and does not come to the aid of the individual, who must extricate himself as best he can. We were growing up now, and in the natural course of affairs were supposed to learn, among other things, how to fence and ride,⁶⁵ so that we could defend ourselves, should the occasion arise, and also not look awkward on horseback. As to the first of these, it was an exercise we enjoyed very much. We had long before this managed to equip ourselves with rapiers made of hazel sticks, with neatly plaited willow guards to protect our hands. Now we were permitted to have actual steel blades, and we made a very lively clatter with them.

There were two fencing masters in town: an older German with strict and thorough methods, and a Frenchman who relied on advances and retreats and light, rapid thrusts, always accompanied by a few exclamations. Opinions were divided as to which way was better. The little group with whom I was to take my lessons got the Frenchman, and we soon learned to step backwards and forwards, to attack and retreat, and simultaneously to break out in the traditional shouts. However, those acquaintances of ours who went to the German fencing master practiced the very opposite. These different ways of approaching a very important exercise, with both groups convinced that their master was the better one, caused a real rift among the boys, who were all approximately of one age, and the fencing schools very nearly occasioned some fencing in earnest. There was almost as much arguing as there was fencing practice, and at last, to bring the matter to an end, a contest was arranged between the two masters, the course of which I need not describe in detail. The German held his position like a wall, waiting for his opportunity, and was able to disarm his opponent time after time by lunging and knocking the weapon from his hand. The French-

man asserted that this was not a point against him, and he continued to make the other man pant on account of his agility. He also landed a few thrusts on the German, but, if it had been a real duel, these would have sent no one but the Frenchman himself into the next world.

On the whole, nothing was decided or improved, except that a few boys, including me, transferred to our countryman. But I had already imbibed so much from my first master that some time elapsed before the German could disabuse me of it, and he remained less satisfied with us renegades than with his original pupils.

I had a still worse time with horseback riding. As it happened, I was sent to riding school in autumn and had to begin in the cool, damp season of the year. It was extremely repugnant to me that this fine art was treated so pedantically. First, last, and always the talk was of keeping a firm seat, and yet there was no one to tell a person how to achieve this all-important firmness, and without stirrups one kept sliding back and forth on the horse's back. Moreover, the whole aim of the instruction seemed to be to cheat and humiliate the pupils. Every omission, every misfortune—forgetting to hang the horse's curb in or out, dropping one's whip, or even one's hat—involved a fine, and ridicule besides. This put me in the very worst humor, especially since I could not bear the exercise place itself. The big, ugly enclosure, which was always either dusty or muddy, the cold, the musty smell—I found all of this repugnant in the highest degree. The stable master always gave the best horses to others, perhaps because he was prejudiced in their favor on account of the various gifts, such as breakfast treats, they brought him, or possibly on account of their skill. Not only did he give me the worst horses to ride but also made me wait and seemed to disregard me, so that I spent the most disagreeable hours imaginable at an activity that rightly ought to be the merriest one in the world. Indeed, the impressions made by that time and those conditions have remained so vivid, in spite of the fact that soon afterwards I accustomed myself to riding passionately and recklessly, and even stayed in the saddle for days and weeks, that I studiously avoided enclosed riding schools and would not stay in them for more than a few moments. Generally speaking, it happens frequently that, when the fundamentals of some specific skill are to be imparted to us, this is done in a painful and forbidding manner. In modern times, the conviction that this is troublesome and detrimental has given rise to the educational maxim that everything must be taught to children in a light, amusing, and easy way—which, of course, has become the source of other evils and disadvantages.

With the coming of spring things quieted down at our house. Whereas earlier I had tried to see the whole town, with its religious and secular, public and private buildings (always preferring the old ones, which still predominated at the time), now I made an effort, with the aid of Lers-

ner's *Chronicle*⁶⁶ and other books and pamphlets contained in my father's collection of Francofortiana, to visualize the personages of by-gone times. I seemed to be quite successful at this too, because of my great attention to particulars, whether of times and customs, or of significant individuals.

An old relic that had seemed remarkable to me from childhood was a traitor's skull still stuck up on the bridge tower, the only one of the original three or four, as indicated by the empty iron pikes, to have resisted the inclemencies of time and weather since 1616. The tower was right there in front of one on every trip back from Sachsenhausen to Frankfurt, and the skull caught one's eye. Even as a boy I liked to hear the story of those rebels, Fettmilch and his henchmen: how they were unhappy with the town government, became insurgents, began a mutiny, sacked the Jewish quarter, and caused dreadful melees, but were eventually captured and sentenced to death by imperial commissioners. Later on, I was interested in learning the details and finding out what sort of people they had been. In an old contemporary book, illustrated with woodcuts, I discovered that not only had these men been sentenced to death, but also many councilmen had been dismissed in connection with the many irregularities and inexcusable practices then current. When I thus became more closely acquainted with the circumstances surrounding those events, I began to feel sorry for the unfortunate men, who could be viewed as victims offered up for a future, better constitution. For it was then that the arrangement originated by which both the old aristocratic House Limpurg and the House Frauenstein (developed from a club), plus lawyers, merchants, and artisans, won the privilege of participating in a government on the one hand broadened by an intricate balloting procedure of the Venetian type and on the other hand restricted by citizen-boards, a government appointed to act justly and lacking any great freedom to act unjustly.

Among the uncanny things that oppressed me as a boy, and even as a youth, were especially the conditions in the Jewish quarter, actually called Jews' Lane since it consisted of little more than a single street, which in early times had apparently been crammed like a kennel between the town wall and the moat. Its narrowness, filth, the swarms of people, the disagreeable sound of their accent—all of it together made the most unpleasant impression, even if one only looked in at the gate while passing by. It was a long time before I ventured to go in alone and, once I had escaped the importunities of all those people persistently demanding or offering something to haggle over, I was not eager to return. Also some old tales hovered darkly before my young mind about the Jews' cruelty to Christian children, tales we had seen horribly illustrated in Gottfried's *Chronicle*. And although in more recent times one had a better opinion of them, an extraordinary witness

was borne against them nevertheless in the big mocking picture that was still rather clearly to be seen, to their disgrace, on a wall of the arch under the bridge tower; for it had not been painted by some mischievous private person, but by official order.

Nevertheless, they were God's chosen people and, however this may have come about, walking reminders of the most ancient times. Moreover, they were also human beings, industrious and affable, and even their obstinacy in clinging to their old customs commanded respect. Besides, the girls were pretty and did not seem to be offended if a Christian boy who encountered them in Fisherman's Field on a Sabbath paid some friendly attention to them. Therefore I was extremely curious about their ceremonies. I had no rest until I had made frequent visits to their school, had attended a circumcision and a wedding, and gotten myself an idea of the Feast of Tabernacles. I was well received everywhere, well entertained, and invited to return, for influential persons either took me there or recommended me.

So, then, as a young resident of a large town I was propelled here and there from one thing to another, and in the midst of all this civil peace and security there were also some scenes of horror. Sometimes we would be shaken out of our domestic tranquillity by a nearby or distant fire, or sometimes a great crime was discovered, and the town could be agitated for weeks while it was being investigated and punished. We had to witness several public executions, and it is probably worth mentioning that I was also present at a book-burning. It involved the whole edition of a French comic novel that, to be sure, spared the state, but not religion and morals. There was really something frightful about seeing punishment carried out on a lifeless thing. The bales burst open in the fire and were pulled apart with pokers so as to bring them in closer contact with the flames. Soon the singed pages were floating around in the air, with the crowd eagerly grabbing for them. We did not rest, either, until we had turned up a copy, and not a few other people likewise managed to provide themselves with the forbidden pleasure. Indeed, if the author wanted publicity, he could not have arranged for it better himself.

However, I was also led here and there around town by more peaceful pursuits. My father trained me early to attend to little business matters for him. Especially he gave me the responsibility of prodding artisans with whom he had placed orders. They usually kept him waiting longer than they should have because he wanted everything done so precisely and then expected a lower price in return for his prompt payment. Thus I got into almost all the workshops. It was my nature to inquire into other people's circumstances, to have a feeling for every particular kind of human existence, and to participate gladly in each one, and therefore these errands gave me many a pleasant hour. I acquainted

myself with each and every procedure and with whatever joys, sorrows, hardships, and advantages accompanied the basic conditions of this and that walk of life. By this means I came in closer contact with this busy class of people, who link the lower and upper classes together. For on one side are those who work with rough, simple products, and on the other those who want the use of something already processed; but it is the artisan's hand and mind that promote an interchange between them and let each group fulfill its individual desires. I likewise made the family life of each trade the object of my quiet attention, noting that its form and coloration were derived from the given occupation. Thus the feeling was developed and strengthened in me that there is an equality, perhaps not of all human beings, but at least of all human conditions, with naked existence as the main requirement, and everything else unimportant and coincidental.

While my father was much disinclined to spend money on things that could be consumed immediately and only afford a momentary pleasure (and I can hardly remember that we ever ate anything at an amusement place when driving out together), on the other hand he was not niggardly about buying things of intrinsic value and good outward appearance. Although recently he had not been in the least inconvenienced by the war, no one could have wished for peace more than he did. In this frame of mind he had promised my mother that as soon as peace was declared she would receive a golden box set with diamonds, and work on this gift had begun several years earlier, in anticipation of the happy event. The box itself, of fair size, was made in Hanau, where my father was on good terms not only with the directors of the silk factory, but also with the goldsmiths. Several designs were made for it: the lid was adorned with a basket of flowers over which hovered a dove with an olive branch. Places were left for the jewels, which were to be set partly on the dove, partly on the flowers, and partly on the spot where a box is customarily opened. The jeweler entrusted with completing the work was named Lautensack, a skilled, lively man. He was like many clever artists in that he was apt to neglect necessary duties for things of his own choosing that gave him pleasure. It is true that he soon set the jewels in black wax in the same configuration in which they would be applied to the box-lid and this looked very good; but somehow they just seemed to stay there instead of being transferred to the gold. At first my father let the matter rest, but when hopes of peace grew stronger, and at last the conditions for peace seemed more definitely known—particularly the elevation of Archduke Joseph⁶⁷ to Roman king—then my father kept getting more impatient, and I was obliged to visit the dilatory artist several times a week, and finally almost every day. Thanks to my constant entreaties and harassment the work moved forward, but not very swiftly. It was of the sort that one can take up

and then lay aside again, and so something always got in the way and took precedence.

Actually, the main reason for this delay was a piece of work the artist had undertaken at his own expense. It was common knowledge that Emperor Francis was very fond of jewels, particularly of colored stones. Lautensack had spent a considerable sum, and, as was later discovered, more than he could afford, on such gems and had begun to form a bouquet of them. Each stone in it was to show off its color and shape to best advantage, and the whole was to be a work of art worthy of a place in the emperor's treasure vault. Lautensack had worked several years on this in his desultory way, but now that peace was in the offing and after that the emperor was expected in Frankfurt for his son's coronation, he was hurrying to finish and finally assemble it. He very adroitly used my curiosity about things like this to distract and divert me from my purpose, which was to prod him. He tried to teach me about these stones and pointed out their properties and value, so that at last I knew the whole bouquet thoroughly and could have shown off its finer points to a customer as well as he. I can still visualize it, and while I may have seen costlier showpieces of this description, I have never seen a lovelier one. He owned a pretty collection of engravings as well, and of other art works, and liked to discuss them. Consequently I spent many hours with him, and not without profit. In the end, after the Congress of Hubertusburg⁶⁸ was actually in session, he exerted himself for my sake, and on the day peace was celebrated the dove and the flowers really did find their way into my mother's hands.

I also received many a similar commission to urge painters to finish the pictures ordered from them. Like most other people, my father was firmly convinced that a picture painted on wood was much superior to one merely done on canvas. Knowing that the more careless painters shifted their responsibility in this very important matter onto the carpenter, my father took great trouble to have a supply of good oaken boards in all sizes. He procured the oldest planks, and the carpenter had to go to work on them most meticulously, gluing, planing, and trimming. Then they remained in storage for years in an upper room where they could dry out sufficiently. One such excellent board was entrusted to the painter Junker, who was supposed to use it to depict, from nature, and in his own delicate, artistic way, an ornamental flowerpot filled with the most significant flowers. It was springtime, and several times a week I conscientiously brought him the most beautiful flowers I could lay my hands on. He would immediately add them to his composition, and by and by these elements were very faithfully and industriously assembled into a whole. On one occasion I also caught a mouse and brought it to him. He took delight in depicting such a dainty little creature, and painted it in great detail gnawing on an ear

of grain at the foot of the flowerpot. I brought him more innocent natural things of this kind, butterflies and beetles, which he depicted, and finally, as far as realism and execution were concerned, a most estimable painting was completed.

Therefore I was more than a little surprised one day, shortly before the work was due to be delivered, to have the good man inform me at great length that he was no longer satisfied with the picture. He said it might be well enough done in its individual parts, but the composition as a whole was not good because it had developed so gradually, and because at the outset he had neglected to sketch even a general plan for light and shade, and for colors, to guide him in arranging the individual flowers. He reviewed the picture with me in detail, and although for half a year I had watched it coming into existence and been pleased with it part by part, he was able, to my sorrow, to convince me completely. He even thought it had been a blunder to depict the mouse, for, as he said, "Such animals make many people's flesh creep and should not be included where pleasure is to be aroused." Now, as is usually the case when one has been cured of a prejudice and is feeling much wiser than before, I was filled with scorn for this artwork and fully supported the artist when he had an identical panel made and used his own taste to paint a better-shaped pot on it, with a more artistically arranged bouquet of flowers and a decorative, pleasing choice and distribution of little ancillary living creatures. This panel was also very carefully painted, if only, to be sure, on the basis of what had already been depicted, or from memory, which he could rely on because of his long, industrious practice. So now both paintings were finished, and we decidedly preferred the second one, for it was really more artistic and striking. We surprised Father with two pictures instead of one, and he was given his choice of them. He sanctioned our opinion and the reasons supporting it, and especially approved of the good will and effort shown. However, after he had studied both pictures for a few days, he decided on the first one, without explaining his choice to any extent. The artist, annoyed, took back his well-meant second picture and could not refrain from remarking to me that the good oaken panel on which the first was painted had certainly played a part in my father's decision.

Since I have mentioned painting here again, I am reminded of a large establishment where I spent a great deal of time because I was interested in it and its director. This was the big oilcloth factory erected by the painter Nothnagel,⁶⁹ who was a skilled artist but had a disposition and talents more inclined to manufacturing than to art. In a very large area consisting of courtyards and gardens were made all types of oilcloth, from the coarsest, which is laid on with a spatula and is used for hand-carts and the like, on through wallpaper stamped in set forms, and up

to the finer and finest ones, on which the brushes of skilled workers recreated either fantastic Chinese flowers or natural ones, or depicted figures and landscapes. I was very much delighted by this endless variety. It was fascinating for me to see so many people occupied in work ranging from the most ordinary kind up to something that could hardly be denied a certain artistic value. I made friends with this throng of men of various ages who were working in a long series of connecting rooms, and sometimes actually helped with the work myself. There was an extraordinarily strong demand for these wares. In those days, anyone who built or furnished a house wanted to be set up for a lifetime, and these oilcloth wallpapers were certainly indestructible. Nothnagel himself was fully occupied with managing the whole enterprise, and he sat in his office, surrounded by foremen and clerks. Whatever time he had left he devoted to his art collection, which consisted primarily of engravings. Occasionally he sold these, as he did the paintings he owned. He had also grown fond of etching. He made various plates and continued working in this branch of art up into his last years.

His residence was near the Eschenheim Gate, and after visiting him I would usually wend my way out of town to see the parcels of land my father owned beyond the gates. One was a large orchard which also served as a meadow. My father carefully oversaw the replanting of trees there, and any other measures necessary for the preservation of the property, although he leased it out. He had still more things to do with a very well-maintained vineyard outside the Friedberg Gate, where, between the rows of vines, rows of asparagus were most carefully planted and tended. In the good season hardly a day passed that my father did not go there, and usually we were permitted to accompany him. So we always had something to eat and enjoy, from the first products of spring to the last ones of autumn. Now we also learned how to go about gardening tasks, which eventually became quite familiar and easy after having been repeated annually. When the many fruits of spring and autumn were gone, however, we still had the grape harvest left, and it was the merriest and most welcome thing of all. Indeed, there is no question about it: just as the wine itself lends a freer character to the towns and regions where it is grown and drunk, so these days of the grape harvest, which both end the summer and begin the winter, propagate a mood of incredible jollity. The merriment and jubilation will extend over an entire region. By day, shouting and shooting are heard on every side, and by night the flares and rockets that are seen now here, now there, are an announcement that people are still up and about everywhere, trying to make the celebration last as long as possible. Our subsequent efforts at the winepress and during the fermentation in the cellar gave us happy employment at home too, and so we usually embarked on winter without really being aware of it.

In the spring of 1763 we enjoyed these rural properties all the more because the 15th of February of that year had turned into a festive day for us, thanks to the signing of the Peace of Hubertusburg, with happy consequences for the greatest part of my life. However, before I proceed, I feel an obligation to mention some men who exerted significant influence over my youth.

Von Olenschlager:⁷⁰ he was a member of the House Frauenstein,⁷¹ a juror, and the son-in-law of the aforementioned Doctor Orth; a handsome, easy-going, sanguine man. In his burgomaster's festival garb he could have passed for the most distinguished French prelate. On conclusion of his university studies he had been active in affairs of court and state and had also traveled for this purpose. He had a very good opinion of me and often spoke to me about matters that particularly interested him. I was a frequent visitor while he was engaged in writing his *Commentary on the Golden Bull*, and he explained the value and dignity of this document very clearly to me. My imagination drew me back into those wild and unsettled times, and I could not resist dramatizing, as it were, his historical recital, with elaborations on the characters and circumstances, and even with some gestures. He was delighted with this, and his applause encouraged me to repeat the performance.

From childhood on it had been my curious habit to memorize the opening words of books, or of the sections of a work, first of the Pentateuch, then of the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses*. Now I did the same with the Golden Bull and often brought a smile to my patron's lips by suddenly exclaiming, in all earnest: "Omne regnum in se divisum desolabitur: nam principes eius facti sunt socii furum."⁷² The shrewd man would smile and shake his head, saying thoughtfully, "What times those must have been, that the emperor would have such words proclaimed directly to his princes at a great imperial assembly!"

Von Olenschlager was very charming in society. While his house saw little company, he was very fond of intellectual conversation, and from time to time he had us young people put on a play, for this was thought to be an especially useful exercise for the young. We gave Schlegel's *Canute*,⁷³ in which I was assigned the role of the king, my sister that of Estritha, and the younger Olenschlager son that of Ulfo. Then we attempted *Britannicus*, for we were expected to practice the foreign language as well as our acting talents. I was given Nero, my sister Agrippina, and the younger son Britannicus. We received more praise than we merited, and thought we had done even better than that. So I was on the best terms with this family, and was indebted to it for many a pleasure, as well as for a more rapid development of my mind.

Von Reineck:⁷⁴ from an old noble family, able, upright, but stubborn; a gaunt, swarthy man, whom I never saw smile. He had suffered the

misfortune of having his only daughter abducted by a family friend. He entered into the most vigorous legal action against his son-in-law, but because the courts, with their formalities, did not comply with his revenge quickly or severely enough, he fell out with them too, and so quarrels engendered quarrels, and lawsuits lawsuits. He withdrew completely into his house with its adjacent garden, and lived in a spacious but gloomy groundfloor room, which for many years had not seen a whitewasher's brush and perhaps hardly a housemaid's broom. He liked me well enough and entrusted especially his younger son to me. Sometimes his oldest friends, who knew how to get along with him, were bidden to his table, together with his business employees and attorneys, and then he never failed to invite me as well. The food at his house was very good, and the drink even better. But the guests were much afflicted by the smoke escaping from many cracks in a big stove. A guest who was on most intimate terms with him once dared to bring this to his host's attention by asking how he could tolerate such discomfort all winter long. He responded like a second Timon and Heautontimorumenos: "Would God this were the greatest evil that plagued me!" Only after a long time could he be persuaded to see his daughter again, with his grandchild. The son-in-law was not permitted into his sight.

My presence had a very favorable influence on this honest but unfortunate man, for while he was enjoying a conversation with me, and especially if teaching me about world and state affairs, he seemed to feel relieved and cheered. The few old friends who still gathered around him made frequent use of me to soothe his troubled spirits and persuade him to take some diversion. Sometimes now he would actually drive out with us and view the region again on which he had not cast a glance for so many years. He would mention the old property owners, tell about their characters and actions, and, for all his sternness, still often prove to be cheerful and witty. We also tried to bring him out among people again, but this very nearly turned out badly for us.

Of his age, or perhaps even older, was a certain Mr. von Malapart,⁷⁵ a wealthy man with a fine house on the Horse Market and a good income drawn from the salt mines. He too lived very much to himself, but in the summer he could often be found in his garden outside the Bockenheim Gate, where he carefully tended a beautiful stand of pinks.

Von Reineck also loved pinks. They were in bloom at this time, and we made several suggestions for an exchange of visits between the two. We broached the subject and returned to it until at last von Reineck decided to drive out there with us one Sunday afternoon. The two old gentlemen greeted each other very laconically, nay, merely in pantomime, and then walked up and down the long frames of pinks with a truly statesmanlike tread. The bloom was really extraordinarily fine,

and eventually the special forms and colors of the various flowers, the superior qualities of some compared to others, and their rarity became material for a sort of conversation, which seemed to be growing quite friendly. We others were all the happier about this because we had seen that in a nearby arbor there was a table laden with the most valuable old Rhine wine in cut-glass decanters, beautiful fresh fruit, and other good things. Unfortunately, however, we were not destined to enjoy them. For, as ill luck would have it, von Reineck noticed a very lovely pink, whose head, however, was drooping slightly. He took the stem between his index and middle finger, very delicately, not far from the calyx, and lifted the flower up from the back to get a good look at it. But even this gentle handling annoyed the owner. Courteously, but rather stiffly, and almost somewhat smugly, von Malapart reminded him of the saying "oculis non manibus."⁷⁶ Von Reineck had already let loose of the flower, but immediately took umbrage at those words and, with his customary dry seriousness, said that surely it was appropriate for a connoisseur and admirer to touch and view a flower as he had done—whereupon he repeated the gesture and took it between his fingers again. The family friends on both sides—for von Malapart had one with him too—were extremely embarrassed now. They set one hare running after the other (this was our proverbial expression for interrupting a conversation and guiding it into other channels), but to no avail. The old gentlemen had become quite mute, and we feared that von Reineck might repeat the act at any moment; that would have doomed us all. The two family friends kept their gentlemen apart by drawing their attention to one thing or another, and the wisest thing for us to do, finally, was to suggest leaving. And so, unfortunately, we had to turn our backs on that alluring table of refreshments, without tasting of anything.

Aulic Councilor Hüsken:⁷⁷ Since he was not native to Frankfurt and belonged to the Reformed church, he was ineligible for any public position and could not even practice law. But people had such great confidence in his abilities as a jurist that he very coolly succeeded in practicing anyway, under someone else's signature, both in Frankfurt and at the imperial courts. He was easily sixty years old when I came to his house to take writing lessons along with his son. He was a large man, tall without being gaunt, broad without being corpulent. At first one was apprehensive about looking at his face, which smallpox had not only disfigured but deprived of one eye. On his bald pate he always wore a plain white bell-shaped nightcap, tied with a ribbon on top. His dressing gowns were made of calamanca or damask, and were absolutely spotless. He lived in a very cheerful suite of rooms on street level in the Avenue, and the cheerfulness of his environment was matched by its cleanliness. The perfect order in which he kept his papers, books,

and maps made an agreeable impression. Although his son Heinrich Sebastian⁷⁸ made a name for himself with several writings on art, he showed little promise in his youth. Good-natured but awkward, more straightforward than rude, and with little desire for learning, he preferred to stay out of his father's way, since in any case he could get whatever he wanted from his mother. I, on the other hand, felt more drawn to the older man, the better I came to know him. He accepted only important cases, and therefore had sufficient time to occupy and amuse himself in other ways. I had not been around him for long, listening to his theories, when I clearly saw that he stood opposed to God and the world. One of his favorite books was Agrippa's *De vanitate scientiarum*,⁷⁹ which he recommended to me highly, and I badly confused my young wits with it for a while. With the complacency of youth I was inclined to a kind of optimism and had become quite reconciled again with God or the gods. As the years passed, experience had taught me that evil is counterbalanced in many ways, that one can recover from afflictions, and that one can be rescued from dangers and not always come to grief. I also looked indulgently on the doings and dealings of human beings, and found much to praise there, which did not please my old gentleman at all. Indeed, one time when he had presented the world to me in its uglier aspects, I could see that he was about to conclude with a last significant trump card. He squeezed his blind left eye tightly shut, as he habitually did in such cases, sent a sharp glance out of the other one, and said in a nasal voice, "I have detected mistakes even in God."

My Timon-like mentor was also a mathematician, but his practical nature inclined toward mechanics, although he did not work at this himself. He had a clock made to his specifications which was a marvel, at least for those times, since it not only indicated the hours and days, but also the movements of the sun and moon. Regularly every Sunday morning at ten he would wind it himself, which he most certainly could do, since he never attended church. I never saw guests or company at his house, and I do not remember his having dressed and gone out above twice in ten years.

My various conversations with these men were not without significance, and each influenced me in his own way. I was as attentive to each one as were his own children, or more so, and each of them, as if I were his beloved son, attempted to recast me in his own spiritual image so that he might approve of me even more. Olenschlager wanted to train me as a courtier, Reineck as a state official; both, especially the latter, tried to wean me away from poetry and authorship. Hüsgen wanted to make me into a Timon like himself, but likewise into a proficient lawyer—for, he said, this trade was necessary so that one could regularly defend oneself and one's family against a world of rabble, or

assist some oppressed person, or perhaps even make life hard for some rascal, although this last was neither particularly feasible nor advisable.

While I enjoyed the company of those men and profited from their advice and suggestions, it was some younger ones, not a great deal older than I, who challenged me to direct emulation. In this connection I shall name here above all the Schlosser brothers and Griesbach. But since my association with them was closer afterwards, and continued uninterruptedly for several years, I shall limit myself at present to saying that they were lauded and held up to us as models of excellence in language and other studies leading to an academic career, and that everyone was quite certain that one day they would achieve something outstanding in the church and the state.

As for me, I too intended to accomplish something extraordinary, but what it would be was unclear to me. However, since one is more apt to think of the reward to be won than of the merit that must first be acquired, I do not deny that when I pictured a desirable success, the most charming form it assumed for me was that of the laurel wreath which is plaited to adorn a poet.

Book Five

There is a bait for every bird, and there is also an individual way to lead, and mislead, every human being. My nature, education, environment, and habits kept me apart from everything coarse, and even though I frequently came into contact with people of the lower classes, artisans in particular, this never developed into a closer relationship. While my temperament was rash enough to let me undertake something unusual or even dangerous, and I sometimes felt inclined to do so, I lacked the opportunity to set about or plan such a project.

Nevertheless, I did become involved, in a completely unexpected way, in a situation that brought me into proximity with great danger and, at least for a time, embarrassed and distressed me. My earlier good relations with the boy I have called Pylades persisted into our adolescent years. Our parents were not on the best of terms, and so we saw each other less often. But whenever we met, the old friendly jubilation would break out. Once we encountered each other in the pleasant promenade between the inner and outer St. Gallen Gate. Hardly had we exchanged greetings when he said to me: "I am having my usual experience with your verses. You know the ones you just recently gave me? I read them aloud to some jolly fellows I know, and not one of them will believe you wrote them."—"Do not let it concern you," I answered. "We shall write and enjoy them, and let others think and say what they please."

"Here comes a skeptic now!" said my friend.—"Let us not mention it," was my answer. "What good would it do? They will not be converted anyhow."—"By no means," said my friend. "I cannot just let it pass."

After a brief, casual conversation, my rather too supportive comrade could not refrain from saying to the other fellow, with some irritation: "This is my friend who wrote those pretty verses that you would not believe were his."—"Surely he is not offended," replied the other, "for it is an honor to him that we think the writing of such verses requires much more learning than anyone of his age can have." I made some indifferent comment, but my friend went on: "It will be quite easy to convince you. Suggest any theme you like to him, and he will write you a poem extempore."—I decided to go along with it, we came to an agreement, and the other fellow asked if I would venture to compose a pretty love letter in verse, of the kind that a bashful young girl would write to a youth to reveal her affection for him.—"Nothing could

be easier," I replied, "if only we had something to write on."—He produced his pocket calendar, which had plenty of blank pages, and I sat down on a bench to write. Meanwhile they walked up and down, not taking their eyes off me. I immediately began to consider the situation and imagined how pleased I would be if some pretty child were really interested in me and wanted to express this in prose or verse. So without delay I began my declaration and in a short time finished it, making it as naive as possible, in a meter halfway between doggerel and madrigal. When I read the little poem aloud to the two of them the result was that the doubter was amazed and my friend delighted. When the former asked to have the poem I could not refuse, for it was written in his calendar, and I was glad to see him in possession of documented proof of my abilities. He departed, assuring me over and over of his admiration and affection, and said he would like very much to be with us frequently. We arranged to take an excursion into the country together soon.

Our outing materialized, and several other young fellows of his sort joined in on it. They were members of the middle or, if you will, of the lower class, and were not unintelligent. Having had some schooling, they did not lack knowledge and a certain amount of culture. There are numerous ways of making a living in a large, rich town, and they supported themselves by becoming amanuenses to lawyers or by tutoring children of the less affluent class as a supplement to the instruction afforded by public elementary schools. They went over lessons in religion with older children who were about to be confirmed, would run errands for middlemen and merchants, and in the evening, especially on Sundays and festival days, would enjoy some frugal refreshments.

On our trip they not only praised my amorous epistle highly but confessed that they had put it to a very amusing use: they had copied it in forged handwriting, with the addition of a few individual references, and had relayed it to a conceited young man. The latter was now firmly convinced that a girl whom he had courted from afar was madly in love with him and looking for an opportunity to get better acquainted. They also confided to me that it was his dearest wish to respond to her in verse, but neither he nor they had sufficient skill, and therefore they implored me to compose the desired answer for them.

Mystifications always have been and always will be entertainment for idle persons who are reasonably clever. A mild degree of malice, a complacent enjoyment of others' misfortunes are the delight of those who know neither how to keep themselves busy nor act to the benefit of others. No age is completely free of this urge. We had often tricked each other in our boyhood years, and many games are based on such mystifications and snares; the present jest seemed to be nothing more

than that, and so I acquiesced. They gave me some particulars about what the letter should contain, and it was finished before we returned home.

A short time later I was pressured by my friend to take part in an evening festivity of that group. This time the lover was going to bring all the refreshments, having expressly said that he wanted to thank the friend who had proved to be such an excellent poetic secretary. We assembled at a rather late hour, the meal was very frugal, the wine drinkable. But as for the conversation, it aimed almost solely at making sport of that person in our midst, who, indeed, was not very bright and was nearly convinced, after having read the letter repeatedly, that he had written it himself.

My natural kindliness kept me from enjoying this malicious pretense very much, and their dwelling on the same theme soon palled on me. I would certainly have had a tiresome evening if an unexpected apparition had not revived me. Upon our arrival the table had already been neatly and properly set, and sufficient wine placed on it. We sat down and remained alone, not needing any service. But when the wine was finally all drunk, someone called for the maid. In her stead, however, a girl entered who was of uncommon and, in comparison to the surroundings, of incredible beauty.—“What do you want?” she asked, after having bidden us a friendly good evening. “The maid is sick in bed. May I serve you?”—“We have run out of wine,” said one of the fellows. “It would be very nice of you to fetch us a few bottles.”—“Go ahead, Gretchen,” said another. “It is only a few steps away.”—“Why not?” she replied, taking a few empty bottles from the table and hastening out. When seen from the back, her figure was almost lovelier still. A little cap was perched very neatly on her small head, and how gracefully the latter was joined to her nape and shoulders by a slender neck! Everything about her seemed choice, and now that my attention was no longer exclusively claimed by her calm, sincere eyes and sweet lips, it was easier to get an impression of her whole form. I reproached the other fellows for having sent this child out into the night by herself, but they just laughed at me. I did not have to worry long, for she came right back; indeed, the tavern keeper lived just across the street.—“For that, you must now come and join us,” said one fellow. She did so, but unfortunately did not sit next to me. She drank a glass to our health and soon departed, advising us not to stay too late and above all not grow too loud, for the mother was just about to retire. It was not her mother, but our hosts’ mother.

From that moment on, the image of this girl pursued me along all highways and byways. This was the first durable impression that a person of the feminine sex had ever made on me, and since I could neither find, nor relished looking for, an excuse to see her at home, I went to

church on her account and soon spied out where she sat. Thus throughout the long Protestant service I could gaze at her to my heart's content. On the way out I did not dare to address her, much less accompany her. I felt blissful enough that she apparently noticed me and nodded in response to my bow. But I was not to be deprived for long of the happiness of approaching her. The lover for whom I had become a poetic secretary was made to believe that the letter written over his signature had really been delivered to his lady. His anticipation of receiving a prompt answer had also been raised to the highest pitch. I was supposed to write this, too, and that group of rogues made Pylades beseech me most urgently to summon up all my wit and use all my skill, so that this piece would be very lovely and perfect.

In the hope of seeing my fair one again, I immediately set to work imagining all the things I would have liked Gretchen to write to me. I was so sure of having caught her personality, her essence, her manner, and her feelings that I could not help wishing she had actually written it, and I was lost in rapture at the mere thought of such a thing being directed by her to me. Thus, while thinking to gull another person, I humbugged myself, and that was to bring me many a joy and many a sorrow. When I was prodded a second time, I was already finished; I promised to come, and was found there at the appointed hour. Only one of the young men was at home; Gretchen sat by the window, spinning; the mother was walking up and down. The young man asked me to read the letter aloud to him. I did so, and not without feeling, for I kept looking furtively away from my paper over to that lovely child. Since I thought I detected a certain nervousness in her manner, a slight flush on her cheeks, I put still better and livelier expression into what I wished she were saying. Although her cousin had often interrupted me with his praise, in the end he wanted some changes made. These were in respect to some passages that admittedly were more applicable to Gretchen's situation than the lady's, for the latter was of good family, well-to-do, and known and highly regarded in town. After the young man had gone over the desired changes with me point for point, he fetched pen and ink for me; but then he excused himself for a short while to attend to some business. I remained sitting on the wall bench behind the big table, which was almost completely covered by a large slab of slate. I tried out the designated changes on this, using a slate pencil that always lay ready on the windowsill for them to do sums on the stone surface, or make various notes for themselves, or even leave messages for someone coming or going.

After I had been sitting there for a while, writing various things and erasing them again, I impatiently exclaimed, "It is not going to work!"—"So much the better!" said the dear girl in a firm tone. "I hope it does not work at all. You should not become involved in such affairs." She

rose from her distaff, walked over to my table, and began to lecture me in a very friendly, sensible way. "The thing looks like an innocent joke. It *is* a joke, but not an innocent one. More than once I have seen our young friends get into serious trouble on account of a piece of mischief like this."—"But what am I to do?" I asked. "The letter is written, and they are counting on me to change it."—"Believe me and do not change it," she answered. "Instead, take it back, stick it in your pocket, leave, and have your friend try to put things right. I shall add a word of my own too, for look, I am only a poor girl and dependent on these relatives—who really do nothing bad but often start on some foolhardy project, for fun or profit—yet I resisted and refused to copy the first letter when they asked me. So they copied it in a disguised handwriting, and they can do the same with this if necessary. And you, a young man from a good home, well to do, independent, why do you allow them to make you their tool in an affair that will bring you no good and perhaps much unpleasantness?"—I was happy to hear her speak at such length, for normally she interjected only a few words into a conversation. My affection increased enormously, I could not contain myself, and I rejoined: "I am not as independent as you think, and what use is it to be well to do if I lack what is most precious to me?"

She had drawn my rough copy of the poetic epistle over to herself and was reading it in an undertone, very sweetly and charmingly. "That is very pretty," she said, pausing where a sort of naive point had been made. "What a pity that it is not destined for a better use, a genuine one."—"That would surely be most desirable," I exclaimed. "How fortunate a fellow would be if he received such assurance from a girl he loved with all his heart that she loved him too!"—"That is not very likely," she replied, "and yet many things prove possible."—"For instance," I continued, "suppose that someone who knows you, and esteems, honors, and adores you, were to place this sheet of paper in front of you with a very earnest, sincere, and friendly request. What would you do?"—I pushed the sheet, which she had already pushed back to me, closer to her again. She smiled, reflected for a moment, took the pen, and signed her name. I was beside myself with joy, jumped up, and was about to embrace her.—"Do not kiss me!" said she. "That is vulgar. But love me, if possible." I had retrieved the sheet and put it in my pocket. "No one shall receive it," I said, "and the matter is settled. You have saved me."—"Now make the rescue complete," she cried, "and hurry away before the others return and put you into an embarrassing situation." I could not tear myself away from her, but then she asked me so sweetly, taking my right hand in both of hers and squeezing it affectionately. I was not far from tears, and thought I saw moisture in her eyes too. I pressed my face to her hands and

hastened away. Never before in my life had I been in such a state of confusion.

The first amorous inclinations of unspoiled youth assume a thoroughly spiritual character. Nature seems to use the difference in sex to make us become aware of the good and beautiful through our senses. And so for me, too, the sight of this girl and my affection for her had opened up a new world full of beauty and excellence. I read through my poetic epistle a hundred times, gazed at her signature, kissed it, pressed it to my heart, and rejoiced in this sweet confession. But the more my rapture increased, the more it pained me that I could not simply visit her and see and speak to her again, for I feared her cousins' reproaches and importunities. I did not know where to find my good Pylades, who could negotiate the matter. The next Sunday, therefore, I set out for the village of Niederrad, where those fellows usually went, and did indeed find them there. But how amazed I was when, instead of acting ill-tempered and distant, they met me with happy faces. The youngest one was especially friendly. He said, taking me by the hand, "That was a knavish trick you recently played on us, and we were really angry at you. But your flight and misappropriation of the poetic letter gave us a good idea that we otherwise might not have thought of. To make amends, you may treat us today, and then you will find out what we are so proud of, and it will certainly please you as well." This approach put me in no small embarrassment, for I had about enough money with me to treat one friend beside myself, and I was by no means equipped to play host to a group, especially not one like this, which did not always stay within bounds. Indeed, his proposal was the more surprising since they otherwise very honorably abided by the rule of everyone's paying his own bill. They smiled at my embarrassment, and the younger cousin continued: "First let us sit down in the arbor, and then you shall hear the details." We sat, and he said: "When you recently took along the love letter, we discussed the whole affair again and concluded that we were misusing your talent for the sake of mere nasty malice, annoying others and putting ourselves in jeopardy, whereas it could be used for our mutual profit. See, I have here an order for a wedding poem, as well as one for a funeral poem. The latter needs immediate attention, but there is still a week's time for the first one. If you consent to do them, which would be easy for you, you will be treating us twice, and we shall long be indebted to you."—Everything about this proposal pleased me. Several occasional poems circulated every week at that time, nay, appeared by the dozens for prominent weddings, and from childhood on they had aroused a certain envy in me, because I thought I could write such things as well or better. Now I was being offered an opportunity to prove myself, and, especially, to see myself in print. I indicated that I was not disinclined. They ac-

quainted me with the family particulars and circumstances, and I withdrew to the side, made my outline, and wrote a few stanzas. However, when I returned to the group and the wine flowed, the poem began to falter, so that I could not finish it that evening. "There is time until tomorrow evening," they said, "and let us tell you that we shall get an honorarium for the funeral poem large enough to pay for another merry evening. Come to our house, for it is only right that Gretchen should share in the fun, since it was she who actually gave us this idea."—I was unspeakably happy. On my way home I thought of nothing but the missing verses, then wrote them down before retiring, and the next morning made a very nice clean copy. The day seemed endlessly long to me, and hardly had night fallen when I was to be found again in that narrow little house, beside my charming girl.

The young fellows with whom I was thus becoming more and more closely associated were not really common, but still just ordinary people. They had commendable occupations, and I listened gladly when they spoke of the many ways and means there are to earn some money. They liked most of all to tell about individuals who had started with nothing and were now very rich. Some were said to have been poor clerks who had become indispensable to their patrons and had eventually been elevated to son-in-lawship. Others had begun with a small business in sulphur matches and the like, which they developed and improved so greatly that they now figured as rich merchants and traders. Especially for young men who were good walkers, it was said, a good, dependable living could be earned by becoming errand boys and agents, and by taking over all sorts of commissions and troublesome duties for rich people who could not get around well. We all liked to hear such things, and each of us felt self-confident as he momentarily imagined himself in possession of sufficient resources not only to get along in the world but even to be outstandingly successful. But nobody indulged in this sort of talk more earnestly than Pylades, who then finally confessed he was very deeply in love with a girl and had actually become engaged to her. His parents' means were not adequate to permit him to go to the university, but he had taken pains to learn calligraphy, arithmetic, and modern languages, and now, in anticipation of domestic bliss, he intended to exert himself to the utmost. The cousins praised him for that, but refused to approve of his premature engagement; and they added, although they acknowledged he was a good, upstanding boy, that they did not consider him energetic or enterprising enough to accomplish anything out of the ordinary. In self-justification he now set out in detail what he was confident of accomplishing and how he meant to begin, and this stimulated the others also, each of whom told what he could do, was doing, was working at, how he had progressed, and what he saw as the next move. At last it was my turn. I too was

now expected to describe my way of life and my prospects, and while I was thinking this over, Pylades said: "I wish to make just one reservation, so that we do not look bad by comparison: he must not take the outward advantages of his situation into account. Instead, let him tell us a tale about how he would manage if he were, at this moment, thrown completely on his own resources."

Gretchen, who had kept on spinning up to this moment, rose and sat down as usual at the end of the table. We had already emptied several bottles, and I was in the best of humor as I began to relate my hypothetical life history. "First of all," I said, "let me strongly suggest that you maintain the clientele you have started to send to me. If all the proceeds from the occasional poems are little by little channeled to me, and we do not just carouse them away, then I shall soon have a tidy sum. Next, you must not take it amiss if I dabble in your trades as well." At this point I recited for them what I had gleaned about their occupations, and which ones I considered myself at all capable of handling. Each of them had previously estimated his merit in terms of money, and so I requested them to help me estimate my income and outgo also. Gretchen had been listening to all this very attentively, and I may add, in a pose that suited her very well either for listening or speaking: with both hands grasping her elbows, she folded her arms and leaned them against the edge of the table. She could sit thus for a long time, moving only her head, and that never without cause or meaning. Sometimes she put in a word or two and made helpful suggestions when our planning faltered, but then she would be as calm and quiet again as before. I did not take my eyes off her, and it can easily be imagined that I framed and expressed my plans with her in mind. My affection for her colored my words with so much apparent truth and feasibility that I momentarily deceived myself into believing I was as isolated and helpless as my story presupposed, and at the same time I felt very happy at the prospect of possessing her. Pylades' confession had ended with marriage, and the rest of us were now asked whether our plans had also proceeded this far. "I do not doubt it in the least," I said, "for truly we each need a wife who will store up at home whatever we have managed to gather in such remarkable ways outside, and generally give us the benefit of it." Then I described the spouse I wished to have, and it would have been a very odd thing if this had not turned out to be Gretchen's perfect double.

The funeral poem was all used up now, but the wedding poem waited beneficently in the wings. I overcame my fears and worries, and since I had many acquaintances I could conceal the true nature of my evening entertainment from my family. Seeing and being near my dear girl soon became an essential requirement of my life. She had grown accustomed to me too, and we were together almost every day, as though it could

not be otherwise. Meanwhile Pylades had also begun to bring his sweetheart to the house, and this pair spent many an evening with us. Although their engagement was just budding, of course this couple did not hide their affection; but Gretchen's behavior was always calculated to keep me at a distance. She gave no one her hand, not even me; she refused to be touched; but sometimes she would sit down beside me, especially while I was reading aloud or writing, and then she would lay her arm familiarly on my shoulder and look into my book or on my sheet of paper. However, if I wanted to take a similar liberty with her she would shrink away and not come back very soon. Yet she often assumed this position, for all her gestures and movements were very uniform, and always equally appropriate, beautiful, and charming. But I never saw her extend that particular familiarity to anyone else.

I went on outings with various groups of young fellows, and one of the most innocent and yet most amusing ones was to get on board the market ship to Höchst, observe the tightly-crowded, odd-looking passengers, and then begin joking and bantering with this one and that, in search of fun or mischief. We would disembark at Höchst just when the market ship from Mainz arrived. An inn there had a well-furnished table where the better class of travelers met to dine before proceeding on their separate ways up and down the river; for both ships went back again. Each time, after eating our midday meal, we would sail back upstream to Frankfurt, and thus, in the midst of a great deal of company, we had made the most inexpensive boat excursion imaginable. Once, when I was taking this ride with Gretchen's cousins, we were joined at table in Höchst by a young man who was apparently a little older than we. They knew him, and he asked to be introduced to me. While his manner was very pleasant, he was not otherwise remarkable. Having come up from Mainz, he now sailed back with us to Frankfurt and conversed with me about various aspects of the town's inner workings, its offices and positions, and he was, I thought, very well informed on the subject. When we parted and he said goodbye to me, he added that he hoped I thought well of him because the occasion might arise when he would appreciate my recommendation. I did not know what he meant by that, but after a few days the cousins enlightened me: They spoke well of him and requested me to intercede for him with my grandfather, since a middle-rank position had just opened up which this friend wished to obtain. At first I made excuses, because I had never meddled in such matters, but they importuned me until at last I resolved to do it. Indeed it had not escaped my notice that when it came to bestowing such offices, and unfortunately this was often regarded as an act of favor, sometimes my grandmother's recommendation, or an aunt's, had not been without effect. I was grown up enough to presume that I too had some influence. Therefore, to please my friends, who declared

themselves very much obligated to me for this kindness, I overcame a grandson's shyness and took the responsibility of delivering a petition that was given to me.

One Sunday, after the meal, when Grandfather was busy in his garden, more than usually so because autumn was near, and I was trying assiduously to help him, with some hesitation I produced my request and the petition. He looked at it and asked me if I knew the young man. I told him vaguely what there was to tell, and he inquired no further. "If he has merit and other good references, then for his sake and yours I shall be favorable to him." More than that he did not say, and for a long time I heard nothing more about the matter.

For some time I had noticed that Gretchen spun no more, but instead busied herself sewing, and indeed with very fine work, which was the more puzzling since the days had grown shorter with the coming of winter. I gave this no further thought, except that several times I was uneasy not to find her at home in the morning as usual, and could not, without prying, ascertain where she had gone. But one day I was in for a very strange surprise. My sister, who was getting ready for a ball, asked me to fetch her some of those so-called "Italian" flowers from a milliner. They were made in convents, and were small and dainty. Especially myrtle, dwarf roses, and the like turned out quite prettily and naturally. I did her the favor and went to the shop, where I had already often been with her. Hardly had I stepped in and greeted the proprietress when I saw a female person sitting in the window who looked very young and pretty in her little lace cap and very well shaped in her silk mantilla. I saw at once that she was an assistant, for she was busy putting ribbon and feathers on a little hat. The milliner showed me a long box full of individual flowers, and as I looked them over, making my choice, I glanced up again at the little lady in the window. But how great was my astonishment when I became aware of her incredible similarity to Gretchen, indeed eventually became convinced that it was Gretchen herself! My last doubts were removed when she winked an eye at me and made a sign that I was not to reveal our acquaintanceship. Now I drove the milliner to despair with my selecting and rejecting, for I was worse than any woman. I really could not settle on anything, for I was utterly confused, and yet I loved my hesitation because it kept me near the dear child. As much as her disguise annoyed me, she seemed to me more charming in it than ever. Finally the milliner lost her patience and with her own hands selected a whole pasteboard box full of flowers, which I was to present to my sister so that she could make her own choice. Then, more or less to drive me out of the shop, she sent this box ahead with her girl.

I had hardly arrived at home when my father sent for me and revealed that the election and coronation of Archduke Joseph as Roman king

was now a certainty. An event of such great significance (he said) cannot be awaited without advance preparation and then allowed to pass by while one merely gapes and stares. Therefore he intended us to peruse the Election- and Coronation-Journals of the last two coronations, as well as the last Election Contract, so that we could note later any new conditions added in the present case. The journals were opened, and we pored over them all day long and until late at night, while my pretty girl, sometimes in her old house clothes, sometimes in her new costume, kept hovering about before me in the midst of these most exalted matters pertaining to the Holy Roman Empire. There was no possibility of seeing her that evening, and I passed a wakeful, very restless night. The previous day's study was zealously continued on the next day, and only toward evening did I arrange to visit my fair one, whom I found back in her usual house clothes. She looked at me and smiled, but I did not venture to mention anything in front of the others. When the whole group was sitting quietly together again, she began to speak, saying, "It is unfair of you all not to tell our friend what we have lately resolved." Then she went on to relate that, after our recent conversation on the subject of making one's way in the world, they had also begun to discuss how a young woman might advance her talents and level of work, and spend her time profitably. The cousin had suggested right away that she should try working for this milliner, who at this very moment was in need of an assistant. They had come to an agreement with the woman for Gretchen to go there so many hours daily, and be well paid. For the sake of propriety, however, she would have to consent to wear a bit of finery, which would then always be left behind because it was quite inappropriate to her circumstances otherwise. This explanation soothed me, except that I was not too pleased to have my pretty child in a public shop, a place where the gallant world occasionally assembled. But I hid my feelings and tried to conquer my jealous worries quietly by myself. The younger cousin granted me little time for this, since he soon produced another commission for an occasional poem, related the personal details, and then immediately asked me to set about devising and arranging the verses. He had already discussed the handling of such a task with me several times. I was very ready to talk about such matters, and so he could easily persuade me to give him a detailed analysis of the rhetorical aspects of these poems, to furnish him with a concept of them, and to use my own works and others of this type as examples. The young man had a good mind, but not a trace of poetic talent, and now he asked for such detailed explanations of everything that I exclaimed, "Why, it looks as if you want to meddle in my trade and steal my customers."—"I do not deny it," he said with a smile, "for I shall not injure you by doing so. Before long you will go to the university, and in the meantime let me have the

benefit of your instruction.”—“With all my heart,” I replied, and encouraged him to sketch a poem himself, to choose a meter in character with the subject, and to do whatever else might seem necessary. He went earnestly to work, but success eluded him. In the end, there was so much for me to rewrite that it would have been easier and better if I had done the whole thing from the beginning. However, this teaching and learning, this communicating, this combined work was good entertainment for us. Gretchen joined in with many good ideas, and so all of us were amused, indeed, one may say happy. During the day she worked at the milliner’s; in the evening we usually met together, and our contentment was not disturbed even when the orders for occasional poems at last began to decline. Of course we once were hurt when a customer was not pleased and returned our poem with a protest, but we consoled ourselves with the thought that this very one was our best work, and we declared that person to be a poor judge. The cousin was bound and determined to learn something, and therefore invented fictitious commissions. While it was still quite amusing to fulfill these, they brought us no income, and of course we had to make much simpler arrangements for our little feasts.

It was beginning to look more and more as if that great constitutional ceremony, the election and coronation of a Roman king, was actually going to take place. The meeting of the Electoral College,⁸⁰ originally set for Augsburg in October, 1763, was now transferred to Frankfurt, and the preparations leading up to this important affair were underway both at this year’s end and at the beginning of the next. The start was made with a procession we had never seen before. One of our magistrates, on horseback and accompanied by four trumpeters, likewise mounted, surrounded by guards on foot, read off in a loud, audible voice, at all four corners of the town, a lengthy edict by which we citizens were informed about the coming events and enjoined to conduct ourselves properly and in keeping with the circumstances. There were great deliberations in the council, and it was not long before the imperial quartermaster made his appearance, having been dispatched by the hereditary marshal to arrange and designate accommodations, according to old tradition, for the envoys and their retinues. Our house was situated in the Electoral Palatine district, and now we had to be prepared for another, but more agreeable, billeting. The middle floor, previously occupied by Count Thoranc, was turned over to an Electoral Palatine cavalier; and Baron von Königsthal,⁸¹ the Nuremberg chargé d’affaires, appropriated the upper floor. Consequently we were crowded together more than at the time the French had been there. This gave me a new excuse for being out of the house and spending most of the day in the streets, where I could gaze at all the public sights.

First we had found it worthwhile to see what arrangements and al-

terations had been carried out in the rooms of the townhall; next, the envoys had arrived singly and then on February 6 held their initial solemn appearance as a body; then we marvelled at the arrival of the imperial commissioners, who also drove up to the Roman in a procession of great pomp. The Prince of Liechtenstein's dignified manner made a good impression on us, although knowledgeable people asserted that his splendid liveries had already been used on another occasion, and also that this election and coronation would probably not be as splendid as that of Charles VII. We younger people made do with what was before our eyes: it all seemed very good to us, and much was even astounding.

The electoral assembly was finally set for the 3rd of March. Now the town was alive with more formalities, and the reciprocal ceremonial visits between the envoys kept us constantly on the go. We also had to be very attentive, because our instructions were not just to gape, but to take note of everything and give a proper account of it at home. We even had to write up a number of little themes, which was a project my father had discussed with Baron von Königsthal, partly for our practice and partly for their information. Actually, this did work to my special advantage, since it enabled me to furnish a fairly good firsthand journal of the external events of the election and coronation.

The delegates whose persons made a lasting impression on me were: first of all, the senior ambassador from Electoral Mainz, Baron von Erthal, who later became the elector.⁸² Without having anything distinctive about his appearance, somehow he always pleased me greatly in his black, lace-trimmed ecclesiastical gown. The junior ambassador, Baron von Groschlag, was a man of the world, handsome and easy of manner, but always extremely proper. In general, he made a very genial impression. Prince Esterhazy, the Bohemian ambassador, though not tall, was well built, lively, but aristocratically proper, and not coldly proud. I took a special liking to him because he reminded me of Marshal de Broglie. Yet to a certain extent the appearance and dignity of these excellent personages were eclipsed by the general prejudice in favor of the Brandenburg ambassador, Baron von Plötho. This man, who distinguished himself by a certain economy both in his own dress and in his liveries and equipages, was a famous statesman-hero of the Seven Years War: In Regensburg, when the notary Aprill, in the presence of several witnesses, was about to serve him with the ban declared against his king, he had made the laconic retort, "What! you dare!" and threw the man, or had him thrown, down the stairs. We believed the first, because we preferred it, and we thought the stocky little man quite capable of it, as he looked back and forth with his fiery black eyes. Everyone's gaze was directed toward him, especially when he descended from his coach. This always started people whispering happily,

and they would be on the verge of applauding and shouting "Vivat!" or "Bravo!" That is how highly the king and all those devoted to him with body and soul were favored by the multitude, which now included not only Frankfurters but Germans from all regions.

On the one hand, I took much pleasure in these things because whatever happened always had a concealed significance of some sort and indicated some inner relationship. Such symbolical ceremonies made the German empire, which was almost buried under a heap of parchment, papers, and books, seem alive again for a moment. On the other hand, I had to admit my private displeasure when, while sitting at home copying the internal negotiations at my father's behest, I could not but notice that several forces counterbalanced each other in their opposition here, being in agreement only in respect to their intention of limiting the new regent even more than the old one; and that everyone wanted to use his influence only to retain and extend his privileges and secure more safeguards for his independence. Indeed, this time they were even more on guard than usual, for they were beginning to be wary of Joseph II, with his impetuosity and suspected plans.

It was not a good time for my grandfather and the other councilmen whose houses I was accustomed to visit, for they were kept busy going to meet the distinguished guests and extending them compliments and gifts. Likewise, the magistracy as a body and as individuals had to defend itself constantly, resisting and protesting, because on occasions like this everyone tries to burden it with something or extort something from it, and there is scarcely anyone to whom it can turn for support or assistance. Suffice it to say I now saw vividly with my own eyes what I had read in Lersner's *Chronicle*⁸³ about similar occurrences on similar occasions; and I had always felt admiration for the patience and endurance of those good old councilmen.

Many a problem also arose from the fact that the town was gradually filling up with both necessary and unnecessary persons. The courts had been reminded in vain, on the town's part, of the rules laid down in the admittedly antiquated Golden Bull. Not only did the official delegates and their entourage have special privileges, but also many persons of rank and others, who came out of curiosity or on private business. The question about who really was to be billeted and who had to rent his own lodgings was not always easy to decide. The turmoil increased, and everyone began to feel uncomfortable, even those who could neither help nor be held responsible in the matter.

Even we young people, who were spectators at all this, did not always find enough to satisfy our eager eyes and imaginations. The envoys' Spanish cloaks and big plumed hats, as well as a few other items, did give things a genuinely antique look. On the other hand, so much was semi-new or completely modern that the character which generally

emerged was merely motley and unsatisfactory, and often even tasteless. Therefore we were very happy to hear that great preparations were underway for the approach of the emperor and the future king, that the deliberations of the Electoral College, based on the previous election contract, were proceeding apace, and that the election day was fixed for the 27th of March. Now plans were made to procure the imperial regalia from Nuremberg and Aachen, and the entrance of the Elector of Mainz was expected at any moment, while the confusion about quarters for his legation still persisted.

Meanwhile at home I kept on very energetically with my secretarial work, and of course this enabled me to perceive that various petty objections were being raised on many sides, which had to be dealt with in the formulation of a new contract. Every rank and condition wanted to see its privileges preserved and its prestige enhanced in this document. Nevertheless, a good many such observations and wishes were shunted aside, and much remained as it had been. At the same time, the complainers were given the most convincing assurances that these omissions would by no means prove prejudicial to them.

The office of the imperial marshal, meanwhile, had to assume a great many troublesome duties: the mass of strangers increased, and it became ever more difficult to house them. There was disagreement about the boundaries of the various electors' districts. The magistracy wanted to shield the citizens from burdens they did not seem obligated to bear, and so by day and night, by the hour, there were complaints, appeals, arguments, and dissension.

The entry of the Elector of Mainz took place on the 21st of March. At this juncture began the cannon salutes that were destined to deafen us repeatedly for some time to come. This festivity figured prominently in the series of ceremonies, for no matter how high the rank was of all the men we had seen enter heretofore, they were still only subordinates. Here, however, appeared a sovereign, an independent prince, just one step below the emperor, heralded and accompanied by an appropriately large retinue. There would be much for me to relate here concerning the pomp of this entry if I did not intend to return to it later on, and actually in a rather unexpected connection.

Namely, on that same day, Lavater⁸⁴ came through Frankfurt on his way home from Berlin, and was one of the spectators at this ceremony. Although such worldly externalities were without the slightest value for him, this glittering procession and everything that went with it apparently made a distinct impression on his very lively imagination. Several years later, when this excellent but peculiar man showed me his poetic paraphrase of (I believe it was) the Revelation of St. John, I found that he had modeled the entry of his Antichrist step for step, figure for figure, circumstance for circumstance, on the entry of the

Elector of Mainz into Frankfurt—and in such a manner that not even the tassels on the heads of the cream-colored horses were missing. I shall have more to say about that when I come to the period of that strange literary genre which, it was believed, would improve our understanding of, and feeling for, the Old and New Testament myths by furnishing a completely modern travesty of them, draping them in a garment of present-day life, whether plebeian or aristocratic. It must also be left for future discussion how this manner of treating Bible stories gradually won popularity, but this much I will say here, that no one went to greater lengths than Lavater and his zealous disciples, one of whom wrote such a modern description of the Three Wise Men riding into Bethlehem that they were personally recognizable as princes and lords who used to pay calls on Lavater.

For the time being, then, we shall let Elector Emmerich Joseph⁸⁵ arrive incognito, as it were, in the Compostela, and turn our attention to Gretchen, whom I caught sight of in the crowd just as it was dispersing. She was in the company of Pylades and his sweetheart (for these three now seemed inseparable). We had hardly reached each other's side and exchanged greetings when we arranged to spend the evening together, and I arrived promptly. The usual group was assembled, and each person had something to relate, say, and observe, for some had been impressed most by one thing, some by another. "Your reports," Gretchen finally said, "confuse me almost more than the events of these days themselves. I cannot make sense of what I have seen, and there is a great deal I should really like to have explained to me." I replied that it would be easy for me to do her this service; she should just tell me what interested her. She did so, and as I was trying to explain, I soon realized that it would be better to proceed in an orderly fashion. I compared these ceremonies and functions not inappropriately to a drama in which the actors keep on acting, but the curtain is lowered at will and then raised again to give the spectator another limited chance to participate in the activities. Because I was really very loquacious when given free rein, I recounted everything from the beginning up to the present day, in the best order, and did not neglect to make my lecture more graphic by using the handy pencil and the big slate slab. Interrupted only slightly by a few questions and contradictions offered by the others, I concluded my lecture to everyone's satisfaction, having been greatly encouraged all the while by Gretchen's unflagging attention. At the end she thanked me and said she envied (to use her expression) those who were versed in the affairs of this world and knew how various things happened and what they meant. She wished to be a boy, and acknowledged in a very friendly way that she was already indebted to me for many a piece of information. "If I were a boy," she said, "we would go to universities together and really learn something."

The conversation continued in this fashion, and she definitely resolved to learn French, which she had perceived in the milliner's shop as being indispensable. I asked why she did not go there anymore, for lately, when I could not get away much in the evening, I had sometimes passed by the shop in daytime on her account, hoping to see her for a moment. She explained that she did not want to be on display there during these restless times. Once the town returned to its normal condition, she planned to go back there again.

The next subject of conversation was the imminent election day. I was able to tell at length what would happen, and how, and I illustrated my presentation with detailed sketches on the slate, because I had in mind a perfectly clear image of the conclave area, with its altars, thrones, armchairs, and seats.—We parted at a decent hour, feeling particularly pleased.

If a young couple is at all harmoniously constituted by nature, nothing can be more conducive to a lovely union than the girl's desire to learn and the young man's inclination to teach. The relationship that ensues is as solid as it is pleasant. She sees in him the creator of her intellectual existence, and he in her a creation owing its perfection not to nature, chance, or a unilateral wish, but to their bilateral will. This interaction is so sweet that we must not be surprised if such a meeting of two personalities has generated the most overwhelming passions and as much happiness as unhappiness, ever since there have been Abelards, old and new.

On the very next day, the town was full of action because of the visits and return visits that were being paid very ceremoniously. But what mainly interested me as a Frankfurt citizen, and gave me much food for thought, was the swearing of the security oath on the part of the council, the military, and the citizenry. This was performed not, as one might think, through representatives, but personally and in mass: first by the magistracy and staff officers in the great hall of the Roman; then by all the citizenry according to their various grades, degrees, and districts on the great square, the Roman Hill; and finally by the rest of the military. Here at one glance one could survey the whole community as it assembled for an honorable purpose, to pledge security for the head and members of the empire, and inviolable peace during the great work at hand. Now Electoral Trier and Electoral Cologne had arrived in person. On the eve of election day all strangers were sent out of town, the gates were closed, the Jews were confined to their narrow lane, and the Frankfurt citizen was not a little proud that he alone might be the witness of this great ceremony.

Up to this time everything had continued to proceed in a fairly modern style: the personages of high and highest rank went about only in coaches. Now, however, we were to see them on horseback in the old,

traditional way. The crowds and congestion were extraordinary. In the Roman, which I knew as well as a mouse knows its own granary, I was able to ease my way around until I reached the front entrance, at which the electors and ambassadors, having driven up earlier in fancy coaches and gathered upstairs, were now supposed to mount on horseback. The stateliest, best-trained horses were decked with richly embroidered saddle cloths and decorated in every possible way. Elector Emmerich Joseph, a handsome, self-possessed man, looked good on horseback. I do not remember the two others as well, actually just that their red, princely cloaks, trimmed in ermine, which we were used to seeing only in paintings, looked very romantic under the open sky. The envoys of the absent secular electors were also a treat for the eyes in their cloth-of-gold Spanish garments, embroidered all over with gold and richly trimmed with galloons of gold lace. They wore old-fashioned hats with turned-up brims, and the plumes waving on them were especially splendid. However, I was not at all pleased with their short modern breeches, white silk stockings, and modish shoes. We would have preferred short half-boots, as golden as desired, or sandals, or something of the kind, just so that we might look at a somewhat more consistent costume.

Here again Ambassador von Plotho behaved differently from everyone else. He was lively and merry-looking, and showed no particular respect for the whole affair. When the elderly gentleman preceding him had trouble swinging himself onto his horse and made Plotho wait a while at the main entrance, the latter burst out laughing. When his own horse was led up, he swung himself upon it very nimbly, and so once again won our admiration as a worthy representative of Frederick II.

Now the curtain fell again for us. To be sure, I tried to push my way into the church, but that proved to be more uncomfortable than amusing. The voting members had retired to the Holy of Holies, where lengthy ceremonies were substituted for a prudent consideration of the election. After waiting long and expectantly, after much crowding and surging, the people finally heard the name of Joseph II, who was proclaimed the Roman king.

The press of strangers into the town grew even heavier. Everyone was driving and walking around in gala clothing, so that eventually the only suits considered noteworthy were those all of gold. The emperor and the king had already arrived in Heusenstamm, a castle belonging to the Counts von Schönborn, and there they were greeted and welcomed in the traditional manner. In town, meanwhile, this important event was being celebrated with sacred rites in all three religions, with high masses and sermons, and, as a secular accompaniment to the *Te Deums*, with the incessant firing of cannons.

If all these public ceremonies, from the beginning up to this point,

were to be judged as a conscious work of art, there was little one could criticize. Everything had been well prepared: the public pageantry started out quietly and became gradually more significant; the spectators increased in number, the personages in dignity, their surroundings, like themselves, in splendor; and this mounted with each passing day, until at last it became too much even for my prepared and waiting eyes.

The entry of the Elector of Mainz, which we have declined to describe more fully, was sufficiently splendid and imposing to suggest (in the imagination of one excellent man⁸⁶) the advent of a prophesied great world ruler. We too had been more than a little dazzled by it. But our expectations were raised to the highest pitch when the word went out now that the emperor and the future king were approaching the town. A tent was erected at some distance from Sachsenhausen, and there the entire magistracy took its stand, in order to show proper respect for the overlord of the empire and to offer him the keys of the city. Still farther out, on a beautiful, broad plain, stood another tent, a large, magnificent one, to which all the electors and electoral ambassadors repaired for the reception of Their Majesties. The respective retinues lined the entire route, so that when their turn came they could move back to town one after the other, in their proper place within the procession. Now the emperor drove up to the tent and entered it. After receiving him respectfully, the electors and ambassadors took their leave, so as to prepare the way for the supreme ruler in an orderly manner.

We others had stayed in town because it was better to admire all this splendor within the walls and in the streets than on the open field, and while waiting we were being entertained very well by the citizenry gathered against the sides of the lanes, by the people crowding up, and by various kinds of jokes and ribaldry resulting from that. Then clanging bells and thundering cannon announced the imminent approach of the ruler. A Frankfurt citizen could not fail to be especially gratified on this occasion, when so many sovereigns and their representatives were present, that the imperial city of Frankfurt also appeared as a little sovereign; for her equerry led the procession, followed by riding horses with armorial blankets on which the white eagle of Frankfurt stood out beautifully against a red field. Then came servants and officials, drummers and trumpeters, and deputies from the council, who were accompanied on foot by council servants dressed in the town livery. Following these were the three companies of citizen cavalry, very well mounted, which were familiar to us since childhood from public occasions such as the fetching of the escorts. We were delighted to share with them in feeling this honor and to own a one hundred-thousandth part of the sovereignty which was manifesting itself here in its full splendor. Then the various retinues of the hereditary imperial marshal

and the electoral envoys representing the six secular electors moved forward step by step. Not one retinue consisted of less than twenty servants and two state coaches, and with some the number was still greater. Next, the retinues of the ecclesiastical electors kept growing larger: the servants and house-officiants seemed countless; there were over twenty state coaches belonging to Electoral Cologne and Electoral Trier, while Electoral Mainz had that many by itself. The servants, both mounted and on foot, were without exception most splendidly dressed, and the gentlemen in the equipages, both religious and secular, had also not neglected to appear richly and worthily dressed, and decorated with all their orders. The horse trainers, the led horses, the saddles and bridles, the covers, and the blankets attracted everyone's eye. Sixteen gala coaches drawn by six horses each, for the imperial chamberlains, privy councillors, the lord high chamberlain, the lord high steward, and the lord grand master of the horse, brought up the rear of this section with great pomp. But for all its splendor and length, this was only to be the vanguard.

However, the file grew more and more concentrated now, as its dignity and splendor increased. Amidst a select company of their own domestic servitors, a few on horseback but most on foot, the electors and the electoral ambassadors made their personal appearance, in ascending order of rank, each in a splendid state coach. Directly behind Electoral Mainz came ten imperial footmen, forty-one lackeys, and eight haiduks, and these heralded the approach of Their Majesties themselves. The most splendid state coach, which was fitted with clear glass all around, even in back, and decorated with paintings, lacquer, carvings, and gilding, the interior lined in embroidered red velvet, afforded us an excellent view of the emperor and the king, those long-awaited principals, in all their magnificence. The procession had been led a long, round-about way, partly because there was no other means of letting it unfold, and partly to make it visible to the large crowds of people. It had passed through Sachsenhausen, over the bridge, down Passage Lane, and then the Row, and turned toward the town center through the Catherine Portal, which had formerly been a gate but with the expansion of the town had become an open passageway. Fortunately there had been consideration of the fact that for a number of years external worldly splendors had been constantly swelling in height and breadth. Measurements had been taken, and it was discovered that the present imperial coach would not be able to get through this portal, which had accommodated so many other princes and emperors, without damaging its carvings and other exterior features. After some deliberation it was decided that in order to avoid an inconvenient detour it would be necessary to take up the paving and contrive a gentle dip down and up again. With the same thought in mind, all the overhangs had been re-

moved from the shops and booths along the streets, so that neither the crown, nor the eagle, nor the genii would be struck and harmed.

When this precious receptacle approached us with its precious contents, we mostly kept our eyes fixed on the high personages, but still could not help glancing over to the splendid horses with their harnesses and fringed decorations. We were particularly struck by the strange coachman and outrider, both of them seated on the horses. Dressed according to imperial court custom in long, black and yellow velvet coats, and wearing caps with great plumes, they looked to be from another nation, nay, from another world. So many things were crowded together now that one could scarcely keep anything apart anymore: the Swiss guards on either side of the coach, the hereditary marshal holding the Saxon sword upright in his right hand, the field marshals riding behind the coach as commanders of the imperial guards, the imperial pages en masse, and at the rear the imperial horse guards themselves, in black velvet coats with elaborate collars, all the seams richly trimmed with gold, and under the coats their red jackets with leather-colored stomachers, likewise richly trimmed with gold. So much was to be seen, interpreted, and pointed out that one could not take it all in. We barely noticed the no less splendidly caparisoned electoral bodyguards, and indeed might have left the windows if we had not still wanted to view our magistracy, who concluded the procession in fifteen coaches and pairs, and above all the secretary of the council, who was riding in the last coach holding the keys to the city on a red velvet cushion. It struck us as quite an honor that our municipal company of grenadiers brought up the rear, and, as both Germans and Frankfurters, we felt not only highly but doubly edified by this worthy day.

We had taken our seat in a house past which the procession would have to go again on its return from the cathedral. The affirmation of the election contract was preceded by so much divine service, music, ceremony, ritual, address and response, lecturing and reading in the church, choir, and conclave room that we had enough time to enjoy an excellent collation and to empty many a bottle to the health of the old and the young ruler. As is usual on such occasions, our conversation drifted back into the past, and some of the older people lauded it above the present, at least in respect to a certain human interest and enthusiastic sympathy which had prevailed then. The coronation of Francis I was not the foregone conclusion that the present one was. The peace treaty had not yet been signed, and his election was opposed by France, Electoral Brandenburg, and the Electoral Palatinate. The troops of the future emperor were stationed near Heidelberg, where he had his headquarters, and the Palatines had almost seized the imperial insignia which were in transit from Aachen. Meanwhile the negotiations went on nevertheless, and neither side took this matter very seriously. Maria

Theresa herself, although an expectant mother, then came to witness in person the long delayed coronation of her spouse. She arrived in Aschaffenburg and boarded a yacht to proceed to Frankfurt. Francis, coming from Heidelberg, planned to meet his consort, but arrived too late: she had already departed. Unrecognized, he leapt into a small boat, hurried in pursuit, reached her ship, and the loving couple enjoyed this surprising reunion. The rumor of it spread at once, and the whole world took a sympathetic interest in this affectionate married couple, who were richly blessed with children and had been so inseparable since their wedding that once, on a trip from Vienna to Florence, they insisted on undergoing quarantine together on the Venetian border. Maria Theresa received a jubilant welcome in Frankfurt and stayed at the Roman Emperor inn, while on the Bornheim Heath the big tent had been set up to receive her husband. Of the ecclesiastical electors, only Mainz was in attendance, and of the secular ambassadors, only those from Saxony, Bohemia, and Hanover. The entry began, and whatever it may have lacked in splendor and completeness was more than compensated for by the presence of that beautiful woman. She stood on the balcony of the centrally located inn and greeted her spouse with a shout of "Vivat!" and hand-clapping. The people were stirred to the greatest enthusiasm by this and joined in. After all, the great are human beings too, and the citizen who loves them thinks of them as his ilk, managing this best if he can picture them as loving spouses, tender parents, devoted brothers and sisters, and faithful friends. At that time, every good thing had been wished and prophesied for the royal couple, and today all was seen fulfilled in their first-born son. Everyone was attracted by his handsome, youthful appearance, and the world placed its highest hopes in the excellent qualities he evinced.

Having lost ourselves completely in the past and future, we were recalled to the present by the arrival of some friends. They were of the sort who recognize the value of novelty, and therefore lose no time in being the first to proclaim one. They had a story to tell about a fine human trait which had been shown by the high personages we had just seen moving by amidst the greatest pomp. That is, it had been arranged for the emperor and the king to meet the landgrave of Darmstadt in the woods while proceeding from Heusenstamm to that great tent. This old prince, no longer far from the grave, wanted, one last time, to see the lord to whom he had devoted himself in former years. Both of them probably remembered the day when the landgrave, who had gone to Heidelberg to deliver the electoral decree naming Francis emperor, responded to the receipt of valuable gifts from him with a declaration of everlasting devotion. The high personages stood in a grove of fir trees, where the old, weak landgrave was holding onto a spruce so that he might continue a while with the conversation, which was not without

emotion on both sides. Afterwards the site was marked in an artless way, and we young fellows walked out several times to see it.

Thus, after we had spent several hours recalling the old and weighing the new, the procession rolled past our eyes again, but more densely and in abbreviated form. We could observe the details more closely, mark them, and impress them on our memory.

From that moment on, the town was in incessant motion. There was no end to the driving back and forth until every single person who had the privilege and duty of paying his respects to the supreme overlords had presented himself individually to them. This made it very convenient for us to review, one by one, the retinues and equipages of each of the high personages that were present.

Now the imperial insignia were also drawing nigh. However, so that the traditional quarrels would not be missing this time either, the insignia had to remain on the open field half the day and far into the night because of a dispute between Frankfurt and Electoral Mainz over territory and escort. The town yielded, the men of Mainz escorted the insignia up to the tollgate, and so the affair was settled for now.

During these days I was in a constant whirl. At home there was writing and copying to do, and to see everything was both our wish and duty. Thus March, whose second half had been so festive for us, drew to an end. I had promised Gretchen a faithful, detailed explanation of the latest happenings and of what was to be expected on the coronation day. That great day was approaching. I knew better how I would present the material to her than what should actually be presented, and so I quickly adapted for this single immediate use everything that I read and copied with my secretarial pen. At last, one evening, although it was already rather late, I went to her house, congratulating myself in advance, to no small degree, on the even greater success this lecture would have than the first, extemporaneous one. But how often we, and others through us, derive more pleasure from what happens spontaneously than from something most purposefully planned! I found more or less the same group there, with the addition of some strangers. They sat down to play cards, and only Gretchen and the younger cousin stayed by me at the slate slab. The dear girl very charmingly expressed her pleasure in having passed for a citizen on election day, although she was not one, and thus having experienced this unique spectacle. She thanked me most warmly for having taken care of her and for having attentively provided her all along, through Pylades, with various admittances by means of tickets, directions, friends, and recommendations.

She liked hearing about the imperial jewels. I promised that we would go together to see them, if at all possible. She made a few joking comments on hearing that the young king had tried on the robes and the

crown. I knew where she would be watching the ceremonies on coronation day and drew her attention to everything that would happen and to what she would be able to observe especially well from her seat.

So we forgot to think of the time. It was already past midnight, and I found that unfortunately I did not have my housekey with me. I could not get into the house without causing the greatest stir. I told her of my embarrassment. "In the end," she said, "it would be best for the group to stay together." This thought had already occurred to the cousins and those strangers, because no one knew where to accommodate the latter for the night. The matter was soon settled. Gretchen went to make coffee, but first equipped a large brass family lamp with a wick and oil and brought it in burning, because the candles were threatening to go out.

The coffee kept us awake for several hours. Eventually, however, their card game lost its zest, and our conversation ran out. The mother was sleeping in the large armchair; the strangers, tired from their journey, were nodding here and there; Pylades and his sweetheart were sitting in a corner. She had laid her head on his shoulder and was asleep; he did not stay awake long either. The younger cousin, sitting opposite us at the slate table, slept with his face pillowed on his crossed arms. I sat in the corner of the window behind the table, Gretchen next to me. We conversed softly, but finally she too was overcome by sleep. She leaned her little head against my shoulder and was soon slumbering. There I sat now, the only one awake, in the oddest situation; but Death's friendly brother Morpheus was soon able to lull me too. I fell asleep, and when I woke again, it was already bright daylight. Gretchen was standing in front of the mirror, straightening her little cap. She was sweeter than ever, and gave my hands an affectionate squeeze when we parted. I sneaked back to our house by a circuitous route, for my father, though not without objections from the neighbors, had installed a small observation window in the wall facing toward the little Deer Close, and we avoided this side if we did not want him to spy us coming home. My mother, whose mediation was always a great help to us, had glossed over my absence at morning tea by suggesting I had gone out early, and so this innocent night had no unpleasant consequences for me.

On the whole, and generally considered, the infinitely varied pageant going on around me impressed me only in a very simple way. My sole interest was in carefully watching the external aspects, my sole occupation was what I was assigned to do by my father and Baron von Königsthal, although this did make me aware of the inner course of events. My sole affection was for Gretchen, and my sole purpose was to see and understand everything well enough to review it with her and explain it. When a procession was actually going by I would often be

describing it to myself under my breath, so as to be certain of every detail and earn my sweetheart's gratitude for my attentiveness and precision. I regarded the approval and recognition given me by the others as a mere adjunct.

To be sure, I was presented to some high, aristocratic personages, but none of them had time to bother with other people, nor is it always easy for older men to converse with a young person and question him. For my part, I also was not especially skillful at accommodating myself to people. Usually I won their favor but not their approval. My concerns were perfectly real to me, but I did not inquire whether they meant anything to others. Mostly I was either too animated or too quiet, and seemed either importunate or stiff, depending on whether the individuals attracted or repelled me, and so although I was considered quite promising I was also declared quite odd.

The coronation day finally dawned, the 3rd of April, 1764. The weather was favorable and everybody was on the move. I and several relatives and friends had been assigned good seats in the Roman itself, in one of the upper stories, where we could survey the whole thing perfectly. We were among the first to reach the appointed place, and now the preparations we had inspected close up the day before could be observed by us from above, a sort of bird's eye view. There was the newly erected fountain with two big tubs to its right and left for the red and white wine, respectively, which was to pour from the two beaks of the double eagle on the pillar. There lay a pile of oats, here stood a big wooden shelter in which for several days a whole fat ox had been roasting and stewing over a coal fire. All the approaches to the Roman, whether leading out from it or from other streets toward it, were protected on both sides by barriers and guards. The great square filled up gradually, and the surging and thronging of the crowd grew ever more violent and agitated as it tried its best to push in the direction of every new event and anything special that was announced.

Considerable quiet reigned, notwithstanding, and when the storm bell was rung the whole multitude seemed gripped by a thrill of astonishment. Those of us who could survey the square from above had our attention drawn first to the procession in which the imperial jewels were being brought to the cathedral by the lords of Aachen and Nuremberg. As the palladium of the realm, these jewels had preempted the preferred seat in the coach, and the deputies, in a proper show of respect, rode backwards opposite them. Next the three electors betook themselves to the cathedral. After the insignia were presented to Electoral Mainz, the crown and sword were dispatched to the imperial quarters. Meanwhile the chief persons and the spectators who were in the church were occupied with further preparations and much cere-

monial, as the rest of us, who were informed about such matters, could well imagine.

Before our very eyes, meanwhile, the ambassadors were driving up to the Roman, out of which some noncommissioned officers carried the baldachin to the imperial quarters. At once the hereditary marshal, Count von Pappenheim, mounted his horse. He was a very handsome gentleman with a slim figure who looked extremely good in his Spanish costume with an ornate doublet and golden mantle, his flowing, well-groomed hair topped by a tall plumed hat. As he got underway, amid the ringing of all the bells, the ambassadors, on horseback, fell in behind him, going to the imperial quarters in splendor still greater than that of election day. We would gladly have gone there too; indeed our dearest wish on this day was to be in several places at once. Failing that, we recited to each other what was happening there: "Now the emperor is donning his dynastic robes," we said. "It is a new garment made to the design of the old Carolingian one. The hereditary officials receive the imperial insignia and mount their horses with these in hand. The emperor in his robes, the Roman king in his Spanish habit likewise mount their steeds, and while this is taking place the endless procession in advance of them has already announced their approach to us."

Our eyes were already fatigued by the throngs of richly dressed attendants and of sundry authorities, and by the nobility that walked up with a stately tread. But now, when the electoral ambassadors and hereditary officials came, slowly gliding along on splendidly caparisoned horses, and last of all, under the richly embroidered baldachin carried by twelve jurors and councilmen, the emperor in his romantic clothing, and, a little behind him to the left, his son in Spanish costume—the eye simply no longer sufficed! One wished for a magic formula that would capture this vision for just a moment; but the splendor passed by inexorably, and hardly had the space been vacated when the people surged in to fill it right up again.

But now another press began, for a new approach had to be opened up from the market to the Roman, and a path of boards had to be laid, like a bridge, on which the procession was supposed to walk when returning from the cathedral.

What took place in the cathedral: the endless ceremonies before and during the anointment, the coronation, and the accolade—all of this we were subsequently more than glad to hear from those who had sacrificed much else for the sake of being present in the sanctuary.

Meanwhile the rest of us had eaten a frugal meal without leaving our seats, and although this was the most festive day we had ever experienced, we were obliged to make do with cold food. On the other hand, all the family cellars had yielded up their best and oldest wine,

so that at least in this respect we celebrated the antique festival in an antique way.

The sight most worth seeing on the square was the now completed bridge, which was covered in red, yellow, and white cloth. And soon the emperor, whom we had marveled at, first in his coach and then on horseback, was also going to be admired walking on foot. Oddly enough, we looked forward to this above all, for we thought it the most natural, as well as the worthiest way for him to display himself.

Older persons, who had attended the coronation of Francis I, told the following anecdote: The surpassingly beautiful Maria Theresa had watched the ceremony from a balcony window in House Frauenstein, adjacent to the Roman. When her spouse came back from the cathedral in his strange trappings, presenting himself to her, so to speak, as the ghost of Charlemagne, he had playfully raised both hands to show her the imperial orb, the scepter, and the peculiar gloves, whereupon she burst out laughing and could not stop. This had greatly delighted and edified the whole watching multitude, for it gave them the privilege of seeing with their own eyes the good, natural marital relationship between the supreme couple of Christendom. But when the empress waved her handkerchief in a salute to her husband and herself shouted a loud "Vivat!" to him, then the people's enthusiasm and exultation had risen to its highest pitch, and there had been absolutely no end to the shouts of joy.

Now the peal of bells and the appearance of the first members of the long procession, who stepped very gingerly across the colorful bridge, proclaimed that all was accomplished. Closer attention was paid even than before, and now the procession was more clearly visible, especially for us, since it was coming straight toward us. We saw it and the whole people-filled square almost as a diagram. But there was nearly too much concentration of splendor at the end. The ambassadors, the hereditary officials, the emperor and the king under their baldachin, the three ecclesiastical electors next in line, the black-garbed jurors and councilmen, the gold-embroidered canopy all seemed to be a single mass moved by a single will and grandly harmonious. Emerging at this moment from the temple amidst the peal of bells, it beamed out at us like a holy object.

There is infinite charm in a ceremony that combines politics and religion. We behold earthly majesty surrounded by all the symbols of its power, but when it bows before the heavenly majesty our senses grasp the community of both. For an individual too can only make his relationship to the deity manifest by submitting himself and worshipping it.

The jubilation echoing from the market began to spread over the great square and a tumultuous "Vivat!" rang from thousands upon

thousands of throats, and certainly hearts as well. For this great festival was indeed meant to be the pledge of a lasting peace, and actually Germany was blessed with peace for many years.

The word had gone out several days before, by public proclamation, that neither the bridge nor the eagle over the fountain were to be surrendered, and therefore the people were not to lay hands on them as formerly. The intention was to prevent the many accidents that unavoidably accompany such assaults. But to appease the spirit of the mob at least to some extent, a few specially delegated persons walked up behind the procession, detached the cloth from the bridge, wound it up strip by strip and threw it all into the air. While, to be sure, no accident resulted from this, a ridiculous misfortune did: the cloth unrolled in the air and, in falling, covered an indeterminate number of people. The ones who grasped the ends and pulled them knocked all the ones in the middle to the ground. The latter were then kept shrouded and anxious until they succeeded in cutting or tearing themselves free, each person in his fashion carrying off a corner of the fabric sanctified by the footsteps of Their Majesties.

I did not tarry long to watch this wild merry-making, but instead hurried down from my lofty post and used various little back stairs and passageways to reach the main staircase of the Roman, up which the grand, magnificent mass that I had marveled at from afar was going to flow. The crowd there was not large, since the approaches to the town-hall were well guarded, and I fortunately got directly up to the iron banister on top. Now the main personages went up past me, while their retainers stayed behind in the vaulted corridors below. I could observe them from all sides, and at last quite closely, since the staircase had three landings.

Finally, the two Majesties ascended also. Father and son were clothed as identically as Plautus' twin brothers. The emperor's dynastic robes of purple silk, richly decorated with pearls and precious stones, and also his crown, scepter, and imperial orb were a delight to the eye because they were all new, and a tasteful imitation of antiquity. He also seemed to be quite at ease in this costume, and the simple dignity of his expression betokened both the emperor and the father. The young king, on the other hand, dragged himself along in these vast garments and Charlemagne's jewels as though in a masquerade costume, and he himself could not repress a smile when he occasionally glanced at his father. The crown, which had had to be heavily lined, stood out from his head like the eaves of a roof. Although the dalmatic and stole had been well fitted and taken in, they by no means looked good on him. The scepter and orb were to be marveled at; but obviously it would have created a more favorable effect if this outfit had clothed and adorned a powerful figure, one that was equal to it.

Hardly had the doors of the great hall closed again behind these figures when I hastened to return to my former place, which I had some trouble reclaiming since it had already been taken over by others.

It was just the right time for me to retake possession of my window, for the most noteworthy event to be seen publicly was about to commence. All the people were facing the Roman, and their repeated shouts of "Vivat!" indicated to us that the emperor and king were displaying themselves to the multitude in their robes, at the balcony window of the great hall. Not only were they there to serve as a spectacle, but also to see a curious spectacle enacted before their eyes. First in line, the slim and handsome hereditary marshal swung himself onto his steed. He had laid aside his sword, and in his right hand held a silver measure with handles, in his left a trowel. He rode up to the big pile of oats within the enclosure, bounded into it, dipped the vessel full to overflowing, leveled it off, and carried it back again with great decorum. So now the imperial stables were provisioned. Next the hereditary chamberlain rode into the same area and returned holding a hand basin, complete with ewer and hand towel. More entertaining for the spectators, however, was the hereditary steward, who came to fetch a piece of the roasted ox. With a silver dish, he too rode through the enclosure and up to the big wooden kitchen, soon emerging again to make his way toward the Roman with a covered-up portion of meat. Next it was the hereditary cupbearer's turn, and he rode toward the fountain and fetched wine. Thus the imperial table was now supplied, and everyone expectantly eyed the hereditary treasurer, who was going to distribute money. He too mounted a fine horse, whose saddle was hung on both sides not with pistol holsters but a pair of splendid pouches embroidered with the Electoral Palatine arms. He had hardly started moving when he began to reach in these pouches and freely strewed out gold and silver coins right and left, which always made a very merry gleam in the air, like a metallic rain. Immediately a thousand hands jerked up to catch the gifts, and no sooner did a few coins fall to the ground than the crowd scrambled down and wrestled violently over whatever pieces had come to earth. This action was continuously repeated on both sides of the donor as he rode forward, and of course made a very entertaining sight for the spectators. Things got liveliest of all at the end when he threw out the pouches themselves and everyone tried to snatch this highest prize of all.

Their Majesties had retired from the balcony, and the time had come to offer a second sacrifice to the mob, which in such cases prefers to take its gifts by force rather than receive them calmly and gratefully. It had been the custom in rougher and ruder times to surrender the oats immediately after the hereditary marshal had taken his share; the fountain and the kitchen after the hereditary cupbearer and hereditary

steward had performed their respective offices. This time, however, order and moderation were being observed to prevent any accidents, as far as possible. Yet the old malicious pranks occurred again, with one man packing up a sackful of oats and another cutting a hole in it, and other courtesies of this kind. However, a more serious battle was being waged again now, as usual, over the roast ox. The contest for it could only be fought en masse. Two guilds, the butchers and the wine barrel draymen, had taken their stand in the traditional manner, and only one or the other could obtain the enormous roast. The butchers felt they had the greatest right to the ox since they had delivered it in one piece to the kitchen. The barrel draymen, on the other hand, based their claim on the fact that the kitchen was erected near their corporate headquarters and that they had been victorious the last time. And it was true that one could see the horns of that captured steer, as a sign of their victory, staring out from the grated gable window of their guild assembly house. Both of these large guilds had very strong, hearty members, but I no longer recollect which one carried off the victory this time.

A ceremony of this kind should really conclude with something dangerous and frightening, however, and so here too there was a genuinely terrifying moment in connection with the surrender of the wooden kitchen itself. Its roof was swarming with people before one knew how they had gotten there, and the boards were torn loose and hurled down so fast that it seemed, especially from a distance, as though one of them would surely hit and kill a number of the people crowding around. The shelter's roof was off in a trice, and some individuals were also hanging from the rafters and beams in order to pull them from their moorings. Indeed, several men were still hovering about up there when the posts down below were already sawn through and the framework, swaying back and forth, threatened a sudden collapse. The tender-hearted averted their eyes, and everybody expected a disaster. But there was not even word of any injury, and everything had gone off successfully, though violently and forcibly.

It was known to all that the emperor and king would now leave the cabinet into which they had retreated from the balcony, and would go to dine in the great hall of the Roman. I had been there the day before to admire the preparations for that, and it was my dearest wish to dart just a glance inside today, if possible. So I set out by my accustomed route for the grand staircase, which was directly opposite the great hall. Here I now gaped at the high-born personages who today professed themselves servants of the supreme head of empire. Forty-four counts, all of them splendidly dressed, passed by me carrying the foods up from the kitchen, and to a boy's mind the contrast between their dignity and this activity was understandably confusing. While no great throng

was assembled there, the smallness of the area made it feel rather crowded. The hall was guarded, but people who were authorized went in and out frequently. I caught sight of a Palatine house-official and asked if he could not take me inside with him. He considered it briefly, and then gave me one of the silver vessels he was carrying, which was feasible since I was neatly attired; and so I got into the sanctuary. The Palatine buffet stood at the left, directly by the door, and after just a few steps I was on its platform behind the enclosure.

At the opposite end of the hall, directly by the windows, the emperor and the king, in their robes, sat under baldachins upon raised thrones. The crown and scepter, however, lay at some distance behind them on golden cushions. The three ecclesiastical electors, with their buffets behind them, had sat down on individual daises: Electoral Mainz was opposite Their Majesties, Electoral Trier was to the right, and Electoral Cologne to the left. This upper part of the hall made a worthy and gratifying sight, and prompted me to observe that the clergy likes to stand by its ruler as long as it can. On the other hand, the buffets and tables of all the secular electors, splendidly bedecked but minus their lords, reminded me that through the centuries unfriendly relations had gradually developed between these lords and the supreme head of empire. Their ambassadors had already departed to dine in a side room. And, as if it did not suffice that the greater part of the hall had acquired a spectral appearance because of the splendid preparations made for so many invisible guests, the large empty table in the center was a still drearier thing to contemplate. The numerous settings on it were unused because all the people with any right to them had stayed away out of scruple, even though they were in town, fearing to compromise their honor on this day of greatest honor.

Both my young age and the pressure of present circumstances prevented me from making many observations. I did try hard to see as much as possible and then, when dessert was being served and the ambassadors returned to pay their respects, I sought the open air and went to the house of some good friends in the neighborhood, where I could refresh myself after the day's fasting and get ready for the evening illuminations.

I was planning to celebrate this brilliant evening in a congenial way and had arranged to meet Gretchen, Pylades, and his girl somewhere at a nocturnal hour. The town was already gleaming from one end to the other when I joined my dear friends. I offered Gretchen my arm and we proceeded, very happy in each other's company, from one billet to the next. At first, the cousins were also part of our group, but later melted into the masses of people. It was every bit as bright as day in front of several ambassadorial houses where magnificent illuminations had been set up (that of the Electoral Palatinate stood out prominently).

To keep from being recognized, I had disguised myself a little, and Gretchen approved. We admired the various brilliant displays and the fairylike edifices of flame with which each ambassador had tried to outdo the other. But Prince Esterhazy's display surpassed all the rest. Its plan and execution enchanted our little group, and we were just about to take in its details properly when the cousins met us again and talked about the splendid illuminations adorning the quarters of the Brandenburg ambassador. We did not mind walking the long way from the Horse Market to the Salic Court, where we found, however, that we had been outrageously duped.

The Salic Court is a fine-looking, regular building on the side facing the Main, but the town side is very old, irregular, and drab. Little windows of different sizes and shapes, neither equidistant nor set in a straight line; unsymmetrically placed gates and doors; and a ground floor mostly converted into little shops: these constitute a muddled exterior that no one ever gazes at. Here now this haphazard, irregular, disjointed architecture had been followed, and every single window, door, and other aperture outlined with lamps, which can perhaps be done with a well-built house, but which in this case quite incredibly highlighted the poorest and most misshapen of all façades. As a sort of clown's jest, we found this amusing, but dubiously so, for no one could miss the intention behind it. Also, although we had previously criticized Plotho's other public behavior, we generally esteemed him highly and, being thoroughly well-disposed toward him, we had also admired him as a rogue who, like his king, rose above all ceremony. Nevertheless, we preferred to return to Esterhazy's faery realm.

To honor the day, this august ambassador had completely bypassed his own poorly situated billet and instead had ordered the great linden esplanade by the Horse Market to be adorned in front with a colorfully illuminated portal, and in the back, even more splendidly, with a prospect. The whole enclosure between was marked out with lamps. Among the trees stood pyramids of light and translucent pedestals with balls on top. From tree to tree were strung shining garlands, with swaying chandeliers suspended from them. Bread and sausages were being dispensed to the multitude at several places, and there was no lack of wine either.

Here we now walked up and down most contentedly, four abreast with linked arms, and at Gretchen's side I actually felt I was strolling in those happy Elysian Fields, where one detaches crystal vessels from the trees and they fill up immediately with any wine desired, and where one shakes down fruit that is transformed into any food one wants. Eventually we did feel a need like that and, led by Pylades, we found a very nicely equipped restaurant. Since everyone else was walking about in the streets, we encountered no other guests there. So we en-

joyed ourselves all the more and spent the greater part of the night most cheerfully and happily in the consciousness of our friendship, affection, and love. When I finally accompanied Gretchen to her door, she kissed me on the forehead. It was the first and last time that she showed me this kindness, for unfortunately I was never to see her again.

The next morning while I was still lying in bed, my mother entered, looking disturbed and anxious. It was always easy to see by her expression when she felt upset about anything.—“Get up,” she said, “and prepare to hear something unpleasant. It has been discovered that you are keeping very poor company and have become involved in the most dangerous and evil affairs. Your father is beside himself, and the only concession we have gotten from him is that he will let someone else investigate the matter. Stay in your room and await what is in store for you. Councilor Schneider will come to you. He has his instructions not only from your father but also from the authorities. The matter is already being prosecuted and may take a very bad turn.”

I could well see that the affair was being greatly exaggerated, but was more than a little concerned about them finding out even just the true circumstances. My old friend from the *Messiah* finally entered, tears standing in his eyes. He grasped my arm and said, “I am sincerely sorry to come to you on such a mission. I would not have thought you could go so far astray. But what cannot poor company and a bad example do! And thus a young, inexperienced person is led step by step into crime.”—“I am not conscious of having committed any crime,” I replied to this, “nor of having kept poor company.”—“Now is not the time for a defense,” he interrupted me, “but for an investigation; and, on your part, for an honest confession.”—“What do you want to know?” I asked. He sat down, pulled out a sheet of paper, and began an interrogation: “Did you not recommend so-and-so as your protégé to your grandfather for such-and-such a position?” “Yes,” I answered.—“Where did you meet him?”—“On walks.”—“In what company?”—I stopped short, for I did not relish betraying my friends.—“It is no use keeping anything back,” he continued, “for it is all pretty well known already.”—“What is known, then?” I asked.—“That this person was introduced to you by others of his kind and, to be precise, by * * *.” Here he gave the names of three persons whom I neither knew nor had ever seen, which is what I immediately declared to my questioner.—“You claim,” the latter continued, “not to know these men in spite of having met with them frequently!”—“Nothing of the kind,” I replied, “for with the exception of so-and-so I know none of them, and even him I have not seen in anyone’s house.”—“Have you not often been in * * * Street?”—“Never,” I replied. This, however, was not entirely true. Once I had accompanied Pylades to his sweetheart’s house, and she lived in that street; however, we had entered

by the rear door and had stayed in the garden house. I thought this might justify me in saying I had not been in the street itself.

The good man asked still more questions, all of which I was able to answer in the negative, for I was quite ignorant of all the things he demanded to know. Finally he seemed to become annoyed and said, "You are rewarding me poorly for my trust and good will. I have come to save you. You cannot deny that you have written letters and compositions either for these people themselves or their accomplices, and thus you have been an accessory to their low tricks. I have come to save you, for we are discussing nothing less than forged handwriting, false witness, false promissory notes, and the like. I have not only come as your family friend; I also come in the name and at the behest of the authorities, who, in consideration of your family and your youth, want to spare you and a few other young men who were enticed like you into this net."—It struck me that the very persons with whom I customarily associated were not mentioned among the ones he named. The circumstances may have been close, but they did not match exactly, and I still could hope to spare my young friends. But the honest man pressed me harder and harder. I could not deny that I had come home late many a night, that I had managed to procure a house key, that I had been observed more than once at places of amusement with people of low station and dubious appearance, and that girls were also involved in the affair. In a word, everything but the names seemed to have been discovered. This gave me the courage to persevere steadfastly in my silence.—"Do not make me leave you thus," said my worthy friend. "The matter brooks no delay. Another man will come right after me, and he will not grant you so much latitude. The affair is bad enough; do not make it worse by your obstinacy."

Now I very vividly imagined the good cousins and, above all, Gretchen, being arrested, interrogated, punished, and disgraced. It shot through my mind like a bolt of lightning that, while the cousins treated me with all propriety, they could possibly have engaged in these bad activities, at any rate the eldest one, whom I never really liked and who kept coming home later and later and seldom had a cheerful report to make. But I still withheld my confession.—"Personally," I said, "I am not aware of any wrongdoing and can be quite easy on that score. But it is not impossible that the persons I have associated with are guilty of some rash or illegal action. Let them be sought, found, convicted, and punished; but up until now I have nothing to reproach myself for and do not wish to wrong people who have behaved amicably and kindly toward me."—Instead of letting me finish, he shouted in some agitation, "Yes, they will be found. These scoundrels met in three houses." (He named the streets and designated the houses, and among them, unfortunately, was the one I frequented.) "The first nest is already

cleaned out," he continued, "and right now the same thing is happening to the other two. In a few hours everything will be out in the open. Make an honest confession and avoid a judicial investigation, a confrontation, and all those other horrid things, whatever they are called."—Since the house had been named and designated, I considered further silence useless. Indeed, our meetings had been so innocent that I might even hope to aid my friends more than myself.—"Sit down," I cried out, fetching him back from the door. "I want to tell you everything and thus relieve both our hearts. I only ask that from this moment on you have no doubts about my truthfulness."

I then related the whole course of events to my friend, at first calmly and with composure. But the more I recalled and visualized the persons, the circumstances, and events, and saw myself expected to testify before a criminal tribunal, as it were, concerning so many innocent joys and cheery amusements, the more painful it became for me. At last I burst into tears and abandoned myself to my emotions without restraint. The family friend, who hoped that the real secret was now about to be revealed (for he took my grief as a symptom that I was reluctantly preparing to confess some enormity), tried his best to calm me, because the revelation meant everything to him. He succeeded only partly, but at least enough so that I could finish telling him my story in a scanty fashion. Although satisfied that the proceedings were innocent, he still had a few doubts and fired new questions at me, which again upset me and made me sad and angry. Finally I protested that I had nothing more to tell, and that I certainly had nothing to fear personally, because I was innocent, from a good family, and of good reputation. But (I said) my friends could be just as innocent, and still no one would acknowledge it or be otherwise favorable to them. I further declared that if my friends were not spared like me, their follies overlooked, their mistakes forgiven, and if they were treated with the slightest harshness and injustice, I would kill myself and no one could stop me. My friend tried to calm me in this regard too, but I did not trust him, and was in the most horrible state when he finally left me. I began to reproach myself anyway for having told him about the affair and having brought all the circumstances to light. I saw in advance that quite a different interpretation would be put on our childish actions and youthful affections and intimacies, and feared that I could also have involved my good Pylades in this matter and brought him misfortune. All these fantasies crowded vividly through my mind, one after the other, and intensified and fed my grief until I became quite distraught in my misery, threw myself down full length on the floor, and moistened it with my tears.

I do not know how long I had been lying there when my sister entered. She was startled at my behavior and did her best to bring me to my feet. She reported that a person from the magistracy had been down-

stairs with Father awaiting the return of the family friend, and that, after closeting themselves for a while, the two gentlemen had departed, conversing very happily together and even laughing. She thought she had understood them to say, "It is all right, the affair is of no significance."—"To be sure," I said, flying into a passion, "the affair is of no significance for me or for us, because I have not committed a crime; and even if I had, they would have known how to shield me. But my friends, my friends!" I exclaimed. "Who will stand by them?"—My sister went into great detail trying to console me with the argument that the persons of higher station could not very well be saved unless a veil were also thrown over the faults of the lesser ones. None of that helped at all. Hardly had she gone away when I abandoned myself again to my grief and alternately evoked the images of my affection and passion and those of the present and possible misfortunes. I told myself tale upon tale, saw nothing but misfortune upon misfortune, and made a special point of imagining Gretchen and myself as quite miserable.

The family friend had ordered me to stay up in my room and not communicate with anyone outside of my own family. That suited me all right, because I preferred to be alone. My mother and sister visited me from time to time and never failed to try very hard to comfort me in every kind way. They came already on the second day as emissaries from my now better-informed father with an offer of complete amnesty, which of course I gratefully accepted. But I obstinately refused his proposal that we go together to view the imperial insignia, which were just now on display for the curious. I declared that I could take no more interest in the world or the Holy Roman Empire until I was informed how that sorry affair, which would have no further consequences for me, had turned out for my poor acquaintances. They themselves knew nothing about this, and left me alone. Yet some more attempts were made in the next few days to get me out of the house and make me participate in the public ceremonies. In vain! Neither the great gala day, nor the events in connection with the many promotions in rank, nor the public banquet table of the emperor and the king—nothing could move me. The Elector Palatine might come to pay his respects to both Majesties, the latter might visit the electors, all of them might drive together to the last electoral session to settle the points left outstanding and to renew the electoral covenant—nothing could entice me out of my feverish solitude. I let the bells peal for the thanksgiving feast, let the emperor proceed to the Capuchin Church, let the electors and emperors depart, all without setting foot outside my room on their account. The last cannon salutes, however tremendous they may have been, did not stir me, and, in the same way that the smoke of the powder dissipated and the noise died away, all this splendor faded from my mind.

The only satisfaction I felt now was in ruminating on my misery and letting it multiply a thousandfold in my imagination. All my inventive gifts and knowledge of poetry and rhetoric concentrated themselves on this morbid spot and by their very vigor threatened to inflict an incurable disease on my body and soul. In this lamentable state I thought nothing was worth wishing or longing for anymore. To be sure, I was sometimes seized with an infinite desire to know what was happening to my poor friends and my beloved, what the closer investigation had revealed, and to what extent they might have been found involved in those crimes or innocent of them. This too I imagined in great and manifold detail, invariably picturing them as innocent and very unfortunate. At one moment I would want to rid myself of uncertainty and would write vehement letters to our family friend, warning him not to withhold the outcome of the affair from me. At the next, I would tear them up again because I was afraid to learn the true extent of my misfortune and be forced to relinquish the consolation of those fantasies with which I had alternately tormented and cheered myself.

So I spent my days and nights in great unrest, in delirium and exhaustion, and it was actually a relief when this finally resulted in a rather violent physical illness, so that a physician had to be called and every means taken to calm me. It was thought this could be accomplished in a general way by giving me solemn assurances that everyone more or less involved in the crime had been treated with the greatest forbearance, that my closest friends, being as good as innocent, had been released with a gentle rebuke, and that Gretchen had left town and returned to her home. There was considerable hesitation in telling me the last part, and I did not receive the news very well either, for in my view this was no voluntary departure but an ignominious banishment. Therefore my physical and mental condition was not improved; only now did my distress really begin, and I had ample time to torment myself by imagining the oddest romance, made up of sad events and leading inevitably to a tragic catastrophe.

PART TWO

What one wishes for in youth,
Age will supply it in abundance.

Book Six

Thus I was alternately driven to promote and to hinder my recovery, and a certain concealed anger was added to my other feelings, for it did not escape me that I was being watched. I was never handed anything sealed without being observed for the effects it might produce, whether I would hide it or lay it down openly, and more things of that nature. Consequently I surmised that Pylades, or one of the cousins, or even Gretchen herself might have attempted to write me, to give or ask for news. Now, besides being grief-stricken, I was genuinely annoyed, and had further reason to make my conjectures and cast about for the most unlikely connections.

Before long, I was given a special guardian. Fortunately, it was a man I liked and esteemed. He had been a private tutor in the house of some friends of ours, but had not accompanied his former pupil to the university. He often came to visit me in my sad state, and finally it seemed only natural to furnish him with a room next to mine. Now he was supposed to keep me occupied, calm, and, as I could plainly see, under observation. However, because I cordially liked him and had confided some things to him beforehand (only not my fondness for Gretchen), I resolved to be quite open and straightforward with him. In any case, I would have found it intolerable to live on a daily basis with someone if I was on unsure, strained terms with him. So I did not hesitate long in telling him about the matter, and found it refreshing to relate and repeat the smallest details of my past happiness. What I gained thereby was at least this: that he, as a reasonable man, saw it would be better to acquaint me with the outcome of the story, indeed not to omit a single detail. Once everything was clear to me I could be encouraged with all earnestness and zeal to collect myself, put the past behind me, and begin a new life. Initially he confided to me the names of the other young men of quality who had let themselves be lured first into daring mystifications, then into farcical misdemeanors, and finally into amusing swindles and similar risky things. From this an actual little conspiracy had arisen, which was joined by some unscrupulous people who committed many crimes involving forged papers and counterfeit signatures and were planning still worse ones. The cousins, whom I finally asked about impatiently, had been found entirely innocent, being only slightly acquainted with those other persons, not in league with them. One of the worst was my protégé, who had applied for the office mainly in order to undertake or cover up certain knavish tricks; and my recommendation of him to my grandfather was what really had

implicated me in the affair. After all this I could contain myself no longer and asked what had become of Gretchen, for whom I confessed, once and for all, the greatest affection. My friend shook his head and smiled. "Calm yourself," he said. "This girl passed her test very well and got splendid marks. Nothing but goodness and sweetness was found in her. The examiners themselves were won over by her and could not deny her wish, which was to leave town. What she confessed in regard to you, my friend, is also to her credit. I read her statement in the secret reports myself, and saw her signature." "That signature!" I exclaimed, "which has made me so happy and so unhappy. What did she confess, then? What did she sign?" My friend hesitated to answer, but his cheerful expression indicated that he was not concealing anything very serious. "If you must know," he finally replied, "when the discussion came around to you and her association with you, she said quite frankly: 'I cannot deny that I saw him often and gladly, but I always regarded him as a child, and my affection for him was altogether sisterly. Sometimes I gave him good advice, and far from inciting him to questionable actions, I stopped him from taking part in mischievous tricks that could have gotten him into trouble.'"

My friend continued letting Gretchen talk like a governess for a while, but I had long ago ceased to listen to him. I took it horribly amiss that in the record she had declared me a child, and I considered myself cured on the spot of all my passion for her. I even hastily assured my friend that now everything was settled! Nor did I speak of her anymore, or mention her name. But I could not rid myself of the bad habit of thinking about her, of visualizing her figure, her manner, her behavior, even though now they appeared to me in quite a different light. I found it intolerable that a girl who was at most a few years older should consider me a child, when I thought I could pass for a rather bright, clever young fellow. The cold, distant manner which had formerly so intrigued me in her now appeared quite repugnant to me. The familiarities she permitted herself but would not let me return were odious to me. Nevertheless, I could have accepted all that if only she had not entitled me to regard her as a sly, selfish coquette by signing that poetic love letter, which meant a formal declaration of her affection for me. Nor did she appear so innocent to me any longer in her disguise as a milliner, and I turned these angry thoughts over and over in my mind until I had totally stripped her of any good qualities. Mentally I was convinced, and I believed it necessary to reject her. But her image contradicted this whenever it hovered before me again, which I must admit happened pretty frequently.

Meanwhile this arrow, barb and all, had clearly been torn from my heart, and the question was: how to assist the inner curative powers of youth? I really did regain control of myself, and first of all put a

stop to my frantic weeping, which I now regarded as extremely childish. A great step toward recovery! For I had often spent half the night violently abandoning myself to this grief, and finally could scarcely swallow any more because of my tears and sobs. It became painful for me to take food and drink, and the closely allied chest area also seemed to suffer. But all self-indulgence was banished thanks to the lasting chagrin I felt on account of that discovery. I thought it was dreadful that I had sacrificed my sleep and rest and health for the sake of a girl who flattered her own conceit by looking on me as a baby and on herself as my very wise nursemaid.

Activity alone, I soon convinced myself, was the means of banishing these debilitating ideas; but what should I undertake? To be sure, I had to do some catching up in a great many things and, since it was now time to attend the university, to prepare myself for that in more than one sense. But nothing seemed to appeal to me or to turn out well. Much of the material struck me as elementary and familiar. I found neither the inner strength nor any outer stimulus for a more thorough grounding, and so I let the favorite pursuit of my good neighbor in the next room arouse my interest in a subject that was very new and strange to me and for a long time offered me a broad range of things to learn and ponder. That is to say, my friend introduced me to the mysteries of philosophy. He had studied under Daries¹ in Jena and with his very clear mind had thoroughly grasped the substance of that discipline, in which he now wanted to instruct me as well. But, alas, these matters refused to make the same sort of sense in my brain. I asked questions and made requirements that he promised to answer later and satisfy in the future. However, our main difference of opinion concerned my assertion that there was no need for a separate philosophy, since it was already completely contained in religion and poetry. By no means would he agree to this, trying on the contrary to prove to me that the latter two had to have a philosophical basis, which I obstinately denied, and in the course of our conversation I found arguments to support my opinion at every step. Since poetry is predicated on a certain belief in the impossible, and religion on a similar belief in the unfathomable, I felt that the philosophers were in a very poor position when they attempted to prove and explain the two in their terms. And one could very quickly demonstrate from the history of the subject that each philosopher had rejected the principles of the others, and that the skeptics finally had declared everything to be without ground or foundation.

When my friend saw that I got nothing at all from his dogmatic lectures, he was compelled to study the history of philosophy with me, and I actually found this very diverting, but only in the sense that all the teachings and opinions, as far as I could penetrate into them, seemed equal in value to me. What pleased me most about the oldest philos-

ophers and schools was their amalgamation of poetry, religion, and philosophy, and I reiterated my original opinion the more vehemently when it was apparently borne out by the Book of Job, the Song of Solomon, the Proverbs, and also by the Orphic and Hesiodic lays. My friend based his lectures on the Little Brucker,² and the farther we progressed, the less sense it made to me. I simply could not understand what the first Greek philosophers intended. I considered Socrates an excellent sage, quite comparable to Christ both in his life and death. His pupils, on the other hand, reminded me of the Apostles, for after their master's death they immediately fell out, and each obviously favored only a limited manner of thinking. I was not inspired in the least by Aristotle's keenness or Plato's depth. In contrast, I had already been attracted to the Stoics beforehand, and so I procured Epictetus and studied him with deep interest. While my friend disapproved of such one-sidedness, he could not cure me of it, because, in spite of his manifold studies, he was unable to focus on the main question. He should merely have told me that in life one needs only to be active, and let enjoyment and suffering come of their own accord. But youth can be left to its own devices, for it does not hold to false maxims very long. Life soon tears or lures it away from these again.

The season of fine weather had come. We often walked together out into the open and visited the pleasure resorts which were situated around the town in great numbers. But precisely there is where I felt least at ease, for I still saw the cousins' ghosts about, and feared that one of them might appear in one place or another. Moreover, even the most indifferent glances of other people were a burden to me. I had lost the bliss of being able to walk around unselfconsciously, blameless and unrecognized, not suspecting there was any observer even in the largest crowd. Now the morbid conceit began to torment me that I was attracting people's attention and that their gaze was fixed on my behavior, determining, investigating, and censuring it.

Therefore I drew my friend into the woods, where I fled the monotony of the fir trees for those beautiful, leafy groves which, although they do not spread far and wide in the area, are nevertheless spacious enough to lend concealment to a poor, wounded heart. I chose myself a solemn place in the deepest part of the forest, where the oldest oaks and beeches formed a splendidly big, shaded space. The ground sloped a bit, and this only enhanced the good qualities of the old tree trunks. The densest shrubbery closed a ring around this open circle, giving glimpses here and there of huge, grand, mossy rocks, which brought a full-flowing brook to a sudden fall.

My friend preferred the open, populated landscape by the river, and hardly had I forced him to come here when he jestingly assured me that I had proved myself a true German. He started a detailed report

out of Tacitus about our forefathers' delight in the feelings that nature's artless constructions so splendidly afford us in such solitudes. But I soon interrupted his narrative by exclaiming, "Oh! why is this delightful place not in some deep wilderness? Why may we not fence it in, sanctifying it and ourselves, and thus be separated from the world? Surely no divine worship is more beautiful than that which needs no image, which issues purely from a dialogue in our bosom with nature!"—I still remember how I felt then, but I would not be able to recall my exact words. This much, however, is certain: the only feelings suited to the sublime are those vague, wide-ranging ones characteristic of youth and primitive peoples; and if external things, either formless or molded into incomprehensible forms, are to arouse the sublime within us, they must encompass us with a greatness we cannot fathom.

Such a mood of the soul is felt by virtually all human beings, who likewise seek various ways of satisfying this lofty need. But while the sublime is easily begotten of twilight and night, when forms coalesce, it is, on the contrary, banished by the daylight, which divides and separates everything. Consequently, any advance in culture will also destroy it, unless it has the good fortune of finding refuge in beauty, and becoming closely associated with beauty, in which case both achieve equal immortality and indestructibility.

Short as these pleasurable moments were, my philosophical friend shortened them still more. And when I stepped out into the world again there was no hope at all of reviving that same feeling in that bright, spare environment; indeed, I could hardly retain even the memory of it. But there was no way to calm a pampered heart like mine: It had loved, and had the object of its love snatched from it; it had lived, and now its life was spoiled. If a male friend too clearly betrays his intention of improving your mind, he makes you uncomfortable; however, a woman who educates you (while seeming to indulge you) receives the adoration due a beneficent angel. But that figure, which had made the concept of beauty manifest to me, had disappeared into the distance. It often visited me in the shadow of my oaks, but I could not hold it fast, and I felt a mighty urge to seek for something like it out in the wide world.

Imperceptibly I had trained, nay, compelled my friend and guardian to leave me alone, for even being in my sacred forest with those vague, immense feelings did not satisfy me. The eye was above all others the organ with which I apprehended the world. From childhood on I had lived among painters and become accustomed, like them, to view objects in their relationship to art. Now that I was left to myself and my solitude, this half-natural, half-acquired gift came to the fore. Wherever I looked, I saw a picture, and whatever attracted or delighted me I wanted to capture, and so I began, in the most unskillful way, to draw

from nature. I was totally inept at this, and yet I stubbornly kept on trying, without any technical skills, to reproduce the most splendid things my eyes lighted on. I did greatly develop my awareness of objects, but I grasped them only as a whole, insofar as they affected me. And just as nature had not destined me to be a descriptive poet, so she also refused to bestow on me a draughtsman's capacity for detail. However, this was the only way I had left to express myself, and so I clung to it with melancholy doggedness, redoubling my efforts, the less I saw resulting from them.

But I do not deny that a bit of guile was combined with this: My friend knew from experience that there was no getting away in less than an hour, once I had chosen to make an agonizing study of some half-shaded old tree trunk, with well-lit ferns nestling at its massively gnarled roots and lights twinkling through the grass; and I had noticed how he would usually take his book and seek out another pleasant place to sit. Now nothing would disturb me as I indulged myself in my favorite pastime, which I pursued the more diligently because my drawings were becoming dear to me. I trained myself to see not only what was drawn on them but also what I had thought each time while drawing. Thus the most commonplace plants and flowers can form a cherished journal, because nothing that recalls the memory of a happy moment is insignificant. Even now I still have many things of the kind, left over from various periods, that I would find hard to destroy as worthless, since they take me right back to those times and awaken wistful, but not unpleasant, memories.

Should these drawings have any sort of intrinsic interest, they would owe that distinction to my father's sympathetic attention. He was very much pleased by my guardian's report that I was gradually coming to terms with my situation and, in particular, that I had acquired a passion for drawing from nature. Not only did he himself set great store by drawing and painting, but he had also been told several times by Cousin Seekatz that it was a pity I was not supposed to become a painter. But here again the personal characteristics of father and son came into conflict: I found it well nigh impossible to use good, pristine white paper for my drawings and preferred old discolored sheets, sometimes with writing on one side, just as if my incompetence shunned the ordeal of a white background. Moreover, none of my drawings was quite filled out—and how, indeed, could I be expected to achieve a whole that I might have seen with my eyes, but failed to comprehend, or a detail that I certainly recognized, but had neither the patience nor the skill to delineate? My father's pedagogy in this point too was really admirable. He asked benevolently for my attempts and then drew lines around each incomplete sketch, having in mind to force me into completeness and fullness by this method. He trimmed the irregular sheets

to rights and began a collection of them that some day would enable him to enjoy his son's progress. Consequently, he was not at all displeased that my wild, unsteady nature sent me roaming about the region; on the contrary, he was plainly delighted if I just brought back some sort of sketchbook for him to work on patiently, so that he could bolster his hopes a little.

There was no longer any worry that I might relapse into my former affections and relationships, and so I was gradually given complete freedom. By casual suggestion in the midst of casual company I was able to arrange some walking trips into the mountains, which had seemed so distant and solemn to me, from childhood on, as they stood there. Thus we visited Homburg and Kronberg, and climbed the Feldberg. From there the broad view enticed us ever farther. Nor did we omit to visit Königstein. Wiesbaden and Schwalbach with its environs occupied us for several days. We arrived at the Rhine, which we had seen meandering off into the distance as we looked down from the heights. Mainz amazed us but could not long hold youthful minds that yearned for open spaces. We were delighted with Biebrich's location, and we started on the return trip happy and content.

My father was expecting many sketches from this tour, and yet it had been almost completely unproductive. How much understanding, how much talent, and how much practice are required before one is able to see the wide expanse of a landscape in terms of a picture! However, I had been drawn back imperceptibly into a narrow scope, where I did find some plunder: Not a delapidated castle or heap of ancient-looking ruins did I come upon that I did not consider a worthy subject and sketch as well as possible. I even drew the monument to Drusus on the fortifications at Mainz, at some peril to myself and with the inconveniences one must accept in the pursuit of taking home some pictorial souvenirs of one's trip. Unfortunately I had nothing with me again except scratch paper of the most inferior quality, and I had crowded several things awkwardly together on one sheet, but my paternal teacher was undeterred by that. He cut the sheets in pieces, had the bookbinder mount the items that belonged together, enclosed the individual sketches between lines, and by this means really compelled me to extend the outlines of some mountains to the edge and fill in the foreground with a few plants and stones.

Even if his loyal endeavors failed to improve my talent, his characteristic love of order had a secret influence on me that subsequently proved effective in more than one way.

These half-frolicsome, half-artistic roving took little time and could be repeated frequently; yet I was always drawn homeward again, and, in fact, by a magnet that had always exerted a strong pull on me: my sister. Only one year younger than I, she had lived my whole conscious

life with me and so was most closely bound to me. Added to these natural reasons was a pressure resulting from our domestic situation, that is, a loving, well-disposed, but sober-minded father, who hid his tender heart, with incredible persistence, under an outward bearing of iron sternness, so that he might achieve his goals, which were to give his children the best bringing-up and to build, regulate, and maintain his solid house; and, on the other hand, a mother who was still almost a child herself and developed a conscious individuality only in and along with her two eldest offspring. We three took in the world with a healthy, vital gaze and demanded immediate gratification. This simmering family conflict worsened through the years. The father pursued his aims without swerving or pausing; the mother and children could not relinquish their feelings, their demands, and their wishes.

Under such circumstances it was natural for the brother and sister to become firm allies and cling to the mother, so as to get at least a taste of the pleasures generally forbidden them. But the hours of work and confinement were long and extensive compared to the moments of recreation and pleasure, especially for my sister, who was never permitted to leave the house as long as I. Thus her need to converse with me was intensified by her pining to accompany me to distant places.

In their early years, this brother and sister had their play and study, their growth and cultural development, so completely in common that they could have taken themselves for twins. And this communion, this mutual trust, did not diminish with the increase in their physical and mental powers. Hand in hand, these siblings shared and survived youth's amazed interest in the awakening of its sensual desires and spiritual needs, the latter masked in sensual forms and the former in spiritual ones; also all the reflections about these matters, which tend more to obscure than enlighten, as a fog, when lifting, covers a valley instead of brightening it; and the many errors and aberrations that spring from all this. But the clarification of their strange condition was hampered by the wholesome dread they felt of their close relationship, which kept them the more forcibly apart, the more they tried to approach each other in the search for knowledge.

I dislike making a mere general statement out of a portrayal I undertook years ago but was unable to complete. When I lost this beloved, enigmatic person so prematurely,³ I felt I had every reason for bringing her merits to mind, and so I conceived the idea of a poetic whole which would make it possible to depict her individuality; but the only imaginable form for it was that of the novels of Richardson. Only by means of the most precise detail and infinite particulars, all vividly characteristic of her whole self and indicative of the mysterious depths from which they emerged, only by this means would I have at all succeeded in giving some idea of this remarkable individual, for a spring can only

be imagined as flowing. But I was diverted from this fine, pious intention, as from so many others, by the tumult of the world, and now I have no alternative but to summon up the shade of that blessed spirit for just a moment, as though with the aid of a magic mirror.

She was tall, well and delicately formed, and the natural dignity of her demeanor blended into an agreeable softness. Her features were neither distinctive nor beautiful, and they indicated a character that was neither harmonious nor could ever become so. While her eyes were not the loveliest I ever saw, they were the deepest, making me wonder what lay behind them. They had an incomparable luster when expressing any fondness or love, and yet this was not a truly amorous expression coming from the heart and accompanied by longing and desire; it was an expression of the soul, full and rich, seeming to want only to give, not to require anything in return.

She was, however, really disfigured, to the point where her face could sometimes actually look ugly, by the fashion of those times, which not only bared the forehead but also enlarged it to the utmost, whether by suggestion or in fact, whether by coincidence or design. Although her forehead was very feminine and most smoothly curved, she had a pair of heavy black eyebrows and prominent eyes, and the resulting contrast, if it did not repel a stranger at first sight, certainly did not attract him. She was sensitive about this fact as a child and grew progressively more embarrassed about it when she arrived at the age when the two sexes take innocent pleasure in finding favor in one another's eyes.

No one can be repelled by his own form, and the ugliest person has as much right as the most beautiful one to take delight in himself. Since good will beautifies, and everyone looks at himself in the mirror with good will, it follows that everyone must be pleased with his image, even though he may struggle not to be. My sister, however, was so innately sensible that it was impossible for her to be silly and blind in this regard. Instead, she realized only too well that her girl friends far surpassed her in outward beauty and she took no consolation in being far superior to them in inner qualities.

If a young woman can be compensated at all for a lack of beauty, then this was richly done by the boundless trust, respect, and love all her girl friends gave her. Whether older or younger than she, they all shared the same feelings. A very pleasant group had collected around her, into which some young men had also insinuated themselves, so that nearly every girl found a beau. She was the only one without a partner. To be sure, it was not only her exterior that was somewhat repellent, but the interior that looked out through it was also more forbidding than attractive, for a dignified presence is always a rebuff to the other person. She felt this keenly, did not conceal it from me, and turned her affection to me all the more strongly. It was certainly

an odd situation. Just as confidants can take such a heartfelt interest in a love affair one has revealed to them that they become actual participants, nay, develop into rivals, and finally appropriate one's affection for themselves, so it was between us siblings. While my relationship with Gretchen was being torn asunder, my sister consoled me with an earnestness based on her secret satisfaction that she was rid of a rival. And thus I too could not help feeling, with a quiet touch of malice, that she would have to admit I was the only one who truly loved her, understood her, and revered her. From time to time, when my grief over the loss of Gretchen reawakened and I would suddenly start to weep, lament, and act wild, then my despair over what I had lost would excite her to similar desperate impatience about youthful loves she had never won, or which had failed, or which had quickly passed. We both considered ourselves boundlessly unfortunate, the more so because in this curious instance the confidants could not be transformed into lovers.

Fortunately, however, the whimsical God of Love, who causes so much unnecessary mischief, now intervened beneficially for once and freed us from all our perplexity. I frequently associated with a young Englishman who was being educated in Pfeil's boarding school. He was able to explain his language well, and while practicing it with him I learned a great deal about his country and its people. For quite a long time he came in and out of our house without my noticing that he had any fondness for my sister, yet he apparently had been quietly nurturing one to the point of love, for eventually it made itself known suddenly and unexpectedly. She understood him, and esteemed him as he deserved. She had often been a third party to our conversations in English, and we had both tried to learn the peculiarities of English pronunciation from his lips. As a result, we assimilated not only the individual features of its sound and tone, but also the still more individual ones pertaining personally to our teacher, so that at last we sounded very odd, as though three were speaking with *one* mouth. His efforts to learn German from us in the same way were not successful, and I believe I noticed that even their little love affair was conducted in the English language, spoken and written. These two young persons made a very good pair: like her, he was tall and well formed, only still slimmer. His small, compact face might have been really handsome if not so disfigured by smallpox. His manner was so calm and deliberate that it might sometimes have been called cold and aloof, but his heart was filled with loving-kindness and his soul with nobility, while his affections were as lasting as they were sincere and tranquil. This newly constituted, serious couple was in sharp contrast to the others, which consisted of old acquaintances with more frivolous characters, who were unconcerned about the future and flitted about thoughtlessly in temporary relationships that act as an unproductive prelude to future, more serious alliances and only very rarely exert any permanent effect on life.

This lively company did not fail to make use of the fine spring weather and the beautiful countryside. Boat trips were frequently arranged, because these are the most sociable of all outings. But the powers of individual attraction would immediately manifest themselves whether we went by land or water. Once every pair was joined, the few men who were not spoken for, including me, were either left completely without feminine companionship or with some that did not promise a very merry day. One friend who found himself in this situation apparently lacked a partner chiefly because, for all his good humor, he was not gallant, and, for all his intelligence, was neglectful of the little attentions essential to such unions. With his droll wit he had often bemoaned his case, and at last promised to make a suggestion at our next gathering that would help him and everyone else; and he did not fail to keep his promise. After a splendid trip on the water and a very pleasant stroll, when we had cheerfully and gladly eaten a rustic meal and were lying in the grass among shady hillocks or sitting on mossy rocks and tree roots, and our friend saw that we were in a good mood, he commanded us, with waggish dignity, to sit in a semi-circle. Then he stepped to the fore and began the following emphatic peroration:

“Most worthy friends male and female, paired and unpaired!—My very form of address makes it obvious that this group needs to have a penitential preacher come forth and awaken its conscience. Some of my noble friends are paired, and can be content with that, but the rest are unpaired and far from content, as I can assure you from personal experience. You, my dear paired ones, may be in the majority, but even so I should like you to consider this: is it not a social duty to provide for us all? Why do we gather in these large numbers if not to enjoy each other’s company? And how can we do this when our circle is fragmented into so many little units? Far be it from me to denigrate such beautiful relationships or even to comment on them, but there is a proper time for everything! To be sure, nobody remembers this great and beautiful saying when he himself is adequately supplied with entertainment.”

Then he proceeded, ever more vigorously and comically, to contrast social virtues with amorous feelings. “The latter,” he said, “are never lacking. We always have them, and no one needs any practice to become expert in them. But the former have to be sought out. They require effort, and we never completely master them, however great the progress we make in them.”—Now he went into particulars. Various individuals apparently felt that this hit home, and we could not resist looking around at each other; but it was our friend’s special privilege that no one took offense at him, and so he could continue undisturbed.

“It does not suffice to reveal defects, nay, it is wrong to do so unless one can immediately indicate the means to remedy the situation. Therefore, my friends, I am not, like some Holy Week preacher, going

to admonish you in general terms to repent and mend your ways. Rather, I want to wish all these charming pairs the longest and most enduring happiness, and to help this most assuredly come true, I suggest that these delightful little separate units be divided and suspended for the duration of our social hours. I have," he continued, "already made plans for achieving this, if you approve. Here is a bag containing the names of the gentlemen. Draw one out, my lovely ladies, and agree that the man allotted you will have the favor of serving you for the coming week. This applies only within our circle. When it breaks up, these combinations will be broken too, and your heart shall decide who escorts you home."

The majority of the group was pleased with the address and his delivery of it, and seemed to approve of the idea. But several pairs lowered their eyes, as if they saw no profit in this. Therefore he shouted with comic vehemence:

"Indeed! I am astonished that no one is jumping up, though others hesitate, no one who will praise my suggestion and explain its advantages, and save me from becoming my own eulogist. I am the oldest one among you, God forgive me. I already have a bald head, which is due to much cogitating"—here he removed his hat—"but I shall display it with honor and joy if these meditations of mine, which have dried out my skin and robbed me of my finest adornment, prove to be of some help to me and others. We are young, my friends, and that is fine; we shall grow old, and that is too bad; we mostly get along well together, and that is nicely in tune with the season. But, my friends, the days will soon come when we shall take offence at much in ourselves, and then each of us has to deal with this as he can. But at the same time much in us will be offensive to others, and for reasons we do not understand in the least. We must be prepared for that, and shall begin now."

He had delivered the whole speech, and especially the last passage, in the tone and with the gestures of a Capuchin monk. As a Catholic he had apparently had ample opportunity to study the rhetorical arts of these fathers. Now he pretended to have run out of breath, dried his prematurely bald head (which really did give him the look of a priest), and put the light-hearted group in such a good mood with his nonsense that everyone wanted to hear more. But instead of continuing, he took the bag and turned to the nearest lady. "We must give it a try!" he exclaimed. "The proof is in the pudding. If you are displeased after a week, we shall abandon the idea and return to our old ways."

Half willingly, half reluctantly, the ladies drew out their little scrolls, and it was not hard to see that various emotions were brought into play through this small action. By a fortunate coincidence, the blither spirits were the ones separated, while the more serious-minded pairs remained

together, and so my sister kept her Englishman, which was mutually well received by them from the God of Love and Luck. The master of ceremonies immediately joined together the fortuitous new pairs, a toast was drunk to their health, and they were wished all the more joy, since it was to be of short duration. This was surely the brightest moment that our group had enjoyed for a long time. The young men who were not allotted any young woman were instead given, for a week, the responsibility of caring (as our orator put it) for our wits, souls, and bodies; but especially for our souls, said he, since the other two could probably fend for themselves.

These new masters of ceremonies wanted to distinguish themselves immediately, and quickly introduced some very amusing new games, prepared an unexpected evening meal some distance away, and ordered the excursion boat illuminated for our return trip at night, although the bright moonlight made this unnecessary. However, they excused themselves for this by saying that it harmonized with our new social arrangements to have the tender beams of the celestial moon outshone by terrestrial lights. The moment we stepped on land, our Solon shouted, "Ite, missa est!" Each man escorted from the boat the lady he had won by lot, then surrendered her to her real partner, and exchanged her for his own.

At our next meeting, this weekly arrangement was instituted for the whole summer, and another lottery was held. Unquestionably, the game instilled an unexpected new spirit into our group, and each of us men felt stimulated to display whatever wit and charm he possessed and to pay court most politely to his belle of the moment, trusting himself to have a sufficient supply of compliments to last a week.

Scarcely had we arranged ourselves when, instead of thanking our orator, we reproached him for having withheld the best part of his speech, its final summation. He protested that the best part of any talk was its persuasiveness, and whoever did not intend to persuade should not talk at all; but bringing proof was quite another matter. When we still gave him no peace, he launched into another capuchinade and made it more bizarre than the first, perhaps for the very reason that he intended to say some quite serious things. Namely, he adduced irrelevant Bible passages, incongruous similes, and allusions illustrative of nothing, and with them developed the theme that a person who cannot hide his emotions, inclinations, wishes, projects, and plans will never amount to anything, but will be impeded and made a fool of at every turn; and, above all, that the profoundest secrecy must be observed if one wishes for success in love.

This thought wound its way through the whole speech without actually being expressed in so many words. In trying to understand this odd individual, one must keep in mind that he had great natural gifts

and had developed these talents, and especially his sharp wits, in Jesuit schools, where he had garnered extensive knowledge of the world and humanity, but only in their negative aspects. He was about twenty-two years old, and would have liked to convert me to his misanthropy. But this did not take with me, for I was still very much inclined to be well-disposed and to find others equally so. Meanwhile, he did make me aware of many things.

The personnel of a jolly company cannot be considered complete without an actor who enjoys it when the others enliven a dull moment by shooting the arrows of their wit at him. If he is not just one of those stuffed Saracens that knights tilted at in mock combat, but can handle a skirmish himself by teasing and challenging, wounding slightly and recoiling, and landing a blow while seeming to surrender, then it is hard to find more pleasant entertainment. We had someone like that in our friend Horn,⁴ whose very name inspired all sorts of jokes. On account of his small size he was always called "Littlehorn." He really was the shortest fellow in the group, with rugged but attractive features: a turned-up nose, a somewhat pouting mouth, and little glittering eyes made up a swarthy face that always seemed to invite laughter. His small, compact skull was covered with abundant black curly hair, and his beard was prematurely heavy. He was sorely tempted to let it grow, for then as a comic mask he could keep the group laughing all the time. Although generally neat and nimble, he claimed to be bowlegged, and was so insistent about it that we agreed. This was good for many a joke, for while he was a very good dancer and much sought after as a partner, he attributed this to a female peculiarity of always wanting to see his bowlegs on the dance floor. He had an indestructible cheerfulness, and his presence was required at every gathering. We two were drawn closer together by the fact that he was going to follow me to the university, and he certainly merits being mentioned by me with all honor because he clove to me for many years with infinite love, loyalty, and patience.

My facility in rhyming and discovering poetic qualities in commonplace objects had also enticed him into such work. We poetically embellished the incidents occurring on our little sociable trips and pleasure parties, and so our description of an event would always become an event too. But party games of this kind usually end in mockery, and friend Horn did not always stay within proper bounds in his burlesque portrayals. Therefore sometimes there were bad feelings, but these could soon be soothed and stifled.

Then he also tried his hand at a genre that was very much in vogue, the mock-heroic epic. Pope's *Rape of the Lock* had inspired many imitations. Zachariä⁵ cultivated the genre on German soil, and it had gen-

eral appeal because the usual subject was some buffoon whom the spirits made sport of while favoring a better man.

While there is nothing wonderful about it, it does make one wonder, in viewing a literature, and German literature in particular, when one sees how a whole nation can be captivated by a subject, once this has been introduced and successfully treated in a certain form, and wants to have it repeated in every possible way, until at last the original itself is smothered under the blanket of imitations piled on top of it.

My friend's heroic poem was evidence for this observation. At a large sleighing party an oafish fellow gets a female partner who does not like him. He encounters, drolly enough, a succession of the misfortunes attendant on such occasions, until finally, in asking for the driver's privilege [a kiss], he falls from the driver's seat, having been tripped, of course, by the spirits. The belle grasps the reins and drives home alone, where a favored friend receives her and triumphs over his presumptuous rival. It was, moreover, very neatly contrived in such a way that the four different spirits damage him in stages, until at last the gnomes unsaddle him completely. The poem, which was based on a true story and written in alexandrines, greatly delighted our little audience, who were absolutely convinced that it measured up to Löwen's⁶ *Walpurgis Night* and Zachariä's *Braggadocio*.

Since our social pleasures took up only an evening, and preparations for them but a few hours, I had ample time to read and, as I thought, study. For my father's sake I drilled myself industriously in the Little Hoppe, and could have been examined in it backwards and forwards. Thus I thoroughly mastered the main contents of the *Institutions*. But I was driven on by a restless desire for knowledge: I went into the history of ancient literature, and thence, with a perusal of Gesner's *Isagogue*⁷ and Morhof's *Polyhistorian*,⁸ into encyclopedic study, and so acquired a general idea of the many curiosities there apparently were in life and lore. I kept up this unrelenting, eager industriousness day and night and confused my mind more than I improved it. But then I lost my way in a still greater labyrinth when I found Bayle⁹ in my father's library and became absorbed in it.

A foremost conviction of mine, and one that I renewed constantly, was the importance of the ancient languages. One fact kept emerging for me from out of all the literary hubbub, namely that these languages preserved not only every model of rhetoric but also every other worthy matter the world has ever possessed. Both my Hebrew and my Biblical studies had receded to the background, and my Greek likewise, since my knowledge of it only extended to the New Testament. I held to Latin that much more seriously, for its standard works are closer to us, and beside these splendid original works it offers us the riches of

all times in translations or actual works of the greatest scholars. Therefore I read many things in this language, with great fluency, and believed I could say I understood these authors because none of the literal sense escaped me. Nay, I was quite upset to hear that Grotius¹⁰ had arrogantly remarked that he read Terence differently from boys. The happy limitations of youth! Indeed, of people generally, since they can regard every moment of their existence as complete in itself, and not inquire about true and false, high or low, but only about what is relevant to them.

Now Latin was added to German, French, and English as a language I had learned from practice alone, not from rules and concepts. Anyone familiar with the condition of pedagogy in those times will not find it odd that I skipped over grammar and rhetoric. It all seemed a natural process to me: I retained the words in my mind and ear, along with their formations and re-formations, and used the language fluently for writing and chattering.

Michaelmas approached, the time for me to attend the university, and my heart was stirred as much by the life there as the learning. I felt an increasingly distinct aversion to my native town. Gretchen's removal had nipped the bud from the plant of my boyhood and youth, and it needed time to develop lateral sprouts whose new growth would obliterate the injury. I had ceased to roam the streets and, like other people, took only the necessary routes. Never again did I go to Gretchen's district, not even near it. And just as my old walls and towers were gradually palling on me, so too the municipal organization and everything once held so sacred now appeared before me in distorted images. As grandson of the chief magistrate, I was not ignorant of the secret shortcomings of this republic, all the less so, since children are particularly astonished and quick to investigate when they become suspicious of something they have previously respected unreservedly. I had seen only too clearly the helpless chagrin of honest men when they were in conflict with those who were of partisan spirit, or even open to bribes, and I thoroughly detested any kind of injustice, for children are all rigorous moralists. Although my father was involved in town affairs only as a private person, he expressed his anger very vociferously about many an unsuccessful project. And did I not see that, in spite of all his studies, efforts, journeys, and broad education, he was in the end leading a lonely life within his four walls, the very opposite of what I wanted for myself? These things together put a terrible weight on my spirits, from which I could only free myself by trying to devise a life plan quite different from the one prescribed for me. In my thoughts, I rejected the study of law and devoted myself exclusively to languages, antiquities, history, and everything that flows from them.

To be sure, I found my greatest pleasure in giving poetic form to

what I perceived in myself, in others, and in nature. My facility at this increased constantly because I was led by instinct and had not yet been confused by any criticism. Even if I did not have complete confidence in my productions, I viewed them as merely imperfect rather than totally worthless. If someone found fault with this or that, I would still remain privately convinced that matters were improving in general and that some day I would surely be honorably mentioned next to Hagedorn, Gellert, and other such men. But this vocation seemed all too empty and inadequate by itself: I wanted to devote myself seriously to solid studies and acquire a more comprehensive view of antiquity. Thus, while thinking to make faster progress with my own works, I would also equip myself for a university teaching position, which seemed to me the most desirable thing for any young man who intended to complete his own education and contribute to that of others.

I always had my eye on Göttingen in connection with these ideas. I had full confidence in men like Heyne and Michaelis,¹¹ among many others. It was my dearest wish to sit at their feet and imbibe their teachings. But my father remained adamant. Though family friends who agreed with me tried their best to influence him, he insisted that I go to Leipzig. Now I really began to regard it as legitimate self-defense to resolve on the adoption of my own way of life and study, against his will and sentiments. My father's obstinacy in unknowingly opposing my plans encouraged me in my impiety, and it did not hurt my conscience to listen to him for hours while he told and retold me about the course of life and study I would have to pursue at the university and in the world.

Since I was deprived of all hope for Göttingen, I now turned my gaze toward Leipzig. One bright light for me there was Ernesti, and Morus¹² aroused great confidence too. I tacitly devised a counter-course of study, or rather, I built an air castle on fairly solid foundations, and I even felt that it was an honorable, if romantic, adventure to design one's own career, and not really so fantastic, because Griesbach¹³ had already made great progress on a similar path and was praised by everyone. No prisoner who has loosened his chains and almost filed through the bars of his jail can feel a joy greater than mine as I watched the days vanish and October approach. The unfavorable season did not daunt me, nor the bad roads, about which everyone had some tale to tell. I was not troubled by the thought that it would be wintertime when I came as a greenhorn to a strange place. In short, it was only my present circumstances that seemed gloomy to me, and I imagined the unknown rest of the world in a bright and cheerful light. So I fashioned my dreams and lived exclusively in them, promising myself nothing but good fortune and satisfaction when away from home.

Though I kept my plans secret from everyone else, I could not very

well conceal them from my sister, who initially was very shocked but eventually grew calmer when I promised to come and fetch her so that she could also enjoy the brilliant condition I would attain, and share in my ease.

The impatiently awaited Michaelmas finally arrived, and I delightedly drove off with Fleischer, the book dealer, and his wife, née Triller, who wanted to visit her father in Wittenberg. I departed as indifferently from the worthy town where I had been born and reared as if I never wanted to return to it.

Thus at certain junctures children detach themselves from parents, servants from masters, and protégés from patrons; and such attempts to stand on one's own feet, to be independent, to live for one's own self, whether successful or not, are always in keeping with nature's will.

We had driven out at All Saints Gate, and soon left Hanau behind us, whereupon I arrived at regions that were new to me and thus attracted my attention, even if they were rather cheerless at this season. Persistent rain had absolutely ruined the roads, which in any case had not yet been put in the good condition we find them in later, and therefore our trip was neither pleasant nor safe. Nevertheless, I was indebted to this damp weather for the sight of a natural phenomenon that is no doubt extremely rare, for I have never seen its like again or heard of anyone else's perceiving it. Namely, we were driving up an incline between Hanau and Gelnhausen, and, although it was dark, we decided to get out and walk rather than be exposed to the danger and discomfort of this stretch of road. Suddenly, in a hollow to the right side of the road, I saw a kind of amphitheater, marvellously illuminated. That is to say, innumerable little lights were twinkling there, arranged at various levels within a funnel-shaped space, and they were so bright the eye was dazzled by them. Still more bewildering to the gaze was the fact that some were not stationary, but would hop back and forth, up, down, and back again, and to all sides. However, most of them stayed quiet and kept on flickering. I let myself be called away from this spectacle only with great reluctance, for I would have liked to observe it more closely. When I asked the postillion, of course he claimed not to know anything about any such apparition, but did say there was an old quarry in the vicinity whose middle depths were filled with water. I shall leave the question open whether this was a pandaemonium of will o' the wisps or a company of glowworms.

On our way through Thuringia the roads grew still worse, and our coach unfortunately got stuck at nightfall in the region of Auerstädt. Being far from any people, we did everything possible to work ourselves loose. I did not fail to exert myself strenuously, and probably over-extended the ligaments in my chest by doing so, for soon afterwards

I felt a pain. It disappeared but then recurred, and many years passed before I was entirely free of it.

But in this same night, as though it were specially designated for alternations of fortune, I was to feel some comical chagrin right after an unexpectedly lucky happening. Namely, in Auerstädt we met a genteel married couple who had also just arrived after being detained by similar misfortunes: an impressive, dignified man in his prime, with a very lovely wife. They were courteous enough to invite us to join them at table, and I was flattered when the excellent lady tried to address a friendly word to me. I was sent out to the kitchen to hurry along our hoped-for soup, but I was not accustomed either to such late hours or the hardships of travel and was overtaken by such irresistible drowsiness that I literally fell asleep while walking, and returned to the room with my hat on my head, not noticing that the others were asking the blessing. With unconscious calmness I also stood behind my chair, and did not dream that my behavior was interrupting their devotions in a very comical way. Madame Fleischer had wit, intelligence, and a ready tongue, and before they all sat down she requested the strange couple not to take offense at what had met their eyes here, for the young traveling companion had a strong leaning to the Quakers, who believed it proper to honor God and the king with head covered. The beautiful lady could not help laughing, and thus became all the more beautiful. But I would have given anything in the world not to have been the cause of the merriment that suited her so well. I had hardly removed my hat, however, when these urbane people let the jest drop and fully extinguished sleep, ill humor, and the memory of all past evils with the best wine from their cellaret.

When I arrived in Leipzig, I was especially pleased to see that the fair was in progress, for here I beheld a continuation of home conditions at Frankfurt; the same wares and salesmen, only in different places and in another order. I roamed through the markets and booths with great interest, but my attention was especially drawn to the strangely clad inhabitants of the eastern regions, the Poles, Russians, and above all the Greeks, whom I often returned to see for the sake of their stately figures and dignified costumes.

However, this lively commotion was soon past, and now my attention was taken by the town itself, with its fine, high, uniform buildings. It impressed me very favorably, and undeniably there is something imposing about it in general, but in particular during the quiet moments of Sundays and festival days. Also by moonlight the half-shadowed, half-brightened streets often invited me to take nocturnal promenades.

Meanwhile, I was by no means satisfied with my new circumstances, as against those to which I was previously accustomed. Leipzig does not make the observer think of olden times. Its monuments proclaim

a new, modern epoch redolent of commerce, prosperity, and riches. Yet I felt an affinity toward some buildings that seemed enormous to me: with façades on two streets and large courtyards that enclosed a whole world of civic life within their towering walls, they were like large castles, nay, little cities. I took lodgings in one of these curious areas, in the Fireball, to be exact, which is between the old New Market and the new one. Fleischer, the bookdealer, occupied a couple of pleasant rooms there during the fair, and for the rest of the time I had them for a tolerable price. They faced the courtyard, which was much frequented by persons passing through. My fellow lodger was a respectable but impecunious student of theology, very well grounded in his field, who was greatly worried about his future because of his bad eye trouble. He had brought on the malady by reading too much in the dimmest twilight, and even, to save a bit of oil, by moonlight. Our old landlady was very charitable to him, always friendly to me, and solicitous of us both.

Next, I hurried over with my letter of recommendation to Aulic Councilor Böhme, who had been Mascov's pupil and was now his successor as professor of history and constitutional law.¹⁴ I found myself quite amicably received by a short, heavy-set, lively man, who also presented me to his wife. Both of them, like the other persons to whom I paid my respects, were very encouraging about my future stay, but at first I gave no one a hint about my secret plans, although I could hardly wait for the appropriate moment to declare myself free of jurisprudence and bound to the study of the ancients. I bided my time cautiously until the Fleischers left town again, so that my resolve would not be betrayed prematurely to my family. Then, however, I went without further delay to Aulic Councilor Böhme, feeling that he was the first to whom the matter must be confided, and declared my intentions very steadfastly and frankly. But my speech was by no means well received. As a historian and specialist in constitutional law he was the declared foe of everything that smacked of belles lettres. To my misfortune, he was not on the best terms with the men who cultivated these studies, and he especially detested Gellert, in whom I had rather maladroitly expressed my great confidence. He therefore deemed it quite unacceptable, especially under such circumstances, to send those men a loyal auditor that he himself would lose. He read me an impromptu but extremely severe lecture, asserting that he could not allow such a step without my parents' permission, even if he himself approved of it, which was not the case here. He went on furiously to denigrate philology and language studies, but still more the poetic exercises, to which, of course, I had obliquely referred. He concluded by saying that if I wanted to approach the study of the ancients, jurisprudence offered a much better way of doing it. He called to my mind various

elegant jurists, such as Everhard Otto and Heineccius,¹⁵ promised me wonderful benefits from Roman antiquities and legal history, and made it crystal clear that I would not be wasting my time at all here, even if later on, after more mature consideration and with parental approval, I should still persist in carrying out my intention. He amicably besought me to rethink the matter and to give him my decision soon, for classes were about to begin.

At least he had been good enough not to demand an immediate answer. Being youthfully flexible, I was already convinced by his arguments and the emphasis with which he expounded them, and now I first saw the difficult and doubtful aspects of something I had privately imagined to be so feasible. Shortly afterwards, Madame Böhme invited me to come see her. I found her alone. She was sickly and no longer young, and her infinite gentleness and mildness were in decided contrast to her husband, who blustered even when in a good humor. She went back to his recent discourse and outlined the whole matter to me again in such a friendly, loving, and reasonable way that I could not but yield. For her part, then, she agreed to the few reservations on which I still insisted.

Her husband then made out my class schedule: I was to hear philosophy, legal history and institutions, and some other things. Although I accepted that, I had my way about attending both Gellert's composition course and his course on literary history according to Stockhausen.¹⁶

Gellert enjoyed the extraordinary love and respect of all the young men. I had already visited him and been amicably received. Not tall of figure, he was delicate, but not lean, and had gentle, rather sad eyes, a very handsome forehead, a moderately aquiline nose, a fine mouth, and a pleasantly oval face, all of which gave him an agreeable, attractive appearance. It took some effort to get in to see him. His two student assistants were like priests guarding a sanctuary that is neither open to all comers nor at all times, and no doubt such precautions were necessary, for if he had been willing to receive and satisfy all the people who wanted to come in closer contact with him he would have had to sacrifice his entire day.

At first I attended my lectures diligently and faithfully, but philosophy refused to make sense to me. The odd part about logic was that, if I wanted to learn the correct use of mental processes which I had performed with the greatest ease since childhood, I was supposed to dissect, isolate, and virtually destroy them. I believed I knew approximately as much about matter, the world, and God as the teacher himself did, and it seemed to me that things went badly awry at more than one place. Yet my routine was pretty well maintained until near Shrovetide, when not far from Professor Winckler's¹⁷ house on St. Thomas Place,

right around class time, the most delicious crullers were offered hot from the pan, and we dallied so long over them that our notebooks started coming apart, and toward spring the remains of them melted with the snow and were seen no more.

Soon things went just as poorly with the law courses, for I already knew everything the teacher elected to transmit to us. My originally tenacious diligence in taking notes was gradually lamed, because I found it very tedious to take down again the same material I had rehearsed with my father, alternately asking the questions and answering them, so frequently that I would remember it forever. Subsequently there was even further proof of the injury done to boys by advancing them too far in many things while at school. Time and attention that should be given to language exercises and to really fundamental subjects are curtailed in favor of so-called "factual" studies, which distract more than they cultivate, unless taught methodically and comprehensively.

In passing, I shall mention one more evil that sorely besets students. Like other men with appointed offices, professors cannot all be of one age. Teaching, however, is just a means of learning for the young ones, and, in addition, those with good minds are always in advance of the times. Therefore, in essence they are acquiring their cultural development at the expense of their auditors, since the latter are not instructed in what they really need but in what their teacher deems necessary for his own use. On the other hand, many of the oldest professors have been locked in place for a long time, and generally transmit nothing but set ideas and, as far as particulars are concerned, much that has already been condemned by time as useless and false. A sad conflict arises between the two extremes, pulling young minds back and forth, and balance can hardly be restored by the middle-aged teachers, who combine sufficient learning and culture with an active striving for knowledge and reflection.

So along this way I became acquainted with many more things than I could put in proper order, and therefore I felt ever-increasing dissatisfaction. But I also suffered many small annoyances in daily life, which is the price one must pay for changing one's locality and entering upon new circumstances. The first thing that the women criticized about me was my clothing, for truly I had left home for the university rather oddly fitted out.

My father hated nothing more than if something happened in vain, or someone did not know how to use his time, or was without the opportunity to use it well, and he went to such lengths in his conservation of time and energy that his greatest pleasure consisted of killing two birds with one stone. Consequently he never hired a servant who could not be used in the house in more than one way. Thus he had formerly always written everything with his own hand but later enjoyed

the convenience of dictating to that young man who lived with us. Likewise he found it most advantageous to hire tailors as servants. They had to put their time to good use by making not only their own liveries but also the clothes for father and children, and doing all the mending besides. My father himself took pains to get the best cloth and material, and bought fine wares from the out-of-town merchants at the fairs, which he then stored. I still remember very well how he always patronized the Messrs. von Loewenich from Aachen and from my earliest childhood introduced me to these and other excellent merchants.

Thus the quality of the material was assured, and a sufficient supply was on hand of various kinds of suitings, e.g., serges, Göttingen cloth, as well as the requisite inner linings, and, in respect to materials, we could certainly have passed muster. But everything was usually spoiled by the shape. While our home tailor might possess a journeyman's skills and know how to sew and finish a masterfully cut coat, he was now expected to do the cutting himself, and this did not always turn out very well. Moreover, my father kept every item of dress very neat and clean, and for many years would not so much use as store it. Therefore he was partial to certain old styles and trimmings, so that sometimes we had some strange-looking finery.

This was exactly how my wardrobe for the university had been assembled. It was quite complete and handsome, and even included a coat trimmed with braid. Being accustomed to such attire, I considered myself quite well dressed, but before long, my women friends began to tease me gently, and then to expostulate seriously, until they convinced me that I looked as though blown in from another world. Though very chagrined, at first I did not see what I could do. But when I once happened to see Mr. von Masuren, that very popular "poetic village squire," step on stage in similar clothing and be heartily laughed at more for his external than his inward absurdity, I took courage and boldly exchanged my whole wardrobe all at once for a new-fashioned one suitable to this place, but it was, to be sure, considerably less extensive.

Once this ordeal was passed, a new one came along and struck me as being much more unpleasant, since it concerned something less easily doffed and exchanged.

Namely: I was born and reared in the South German dialect, and while my father always kept to a certain purity of speech and made us children aware from early on of what really may be called the defects of that idiom, thus preparing us for better speech, I still retained some of the deeper-seated peculiarities and liked to emphasize them because their naiveté pleased me. But every time I did this, I incurred a severe reprimand from my new fellow citizens. The South German, that is to

say, and perhaps primarily the one from the Rhine-Main region (for large rivers, like the seashore, tend to invigorate), often expresses himself in similes and allusions and, having a deep understanding of human beings, will use proverbial figures of speech. In both instances he is frequently blunt, but always relevant, if one considers the purpose of the expression; only sometimes a word may creep in that proves offensive to a more delicate ear.

Every province loves its dialect, for, after all, this is really the element in which the soul draws its breath. However, everyone knows how overbearing the Meissen dialect managed to dominate the others, nay, temporarily exclude them. We suffered for many years under its pedantic rule, and only after much conflict did the other provinces succeed in restoring their old rights. The trials of a young, lively person subjected to this constant schoolmasterly correction can easily be imagined by anyone who reflects that along with manner of speech, which a person might eventually agree to change, he also sacrifices imagination, feeling, mode of thinking, and national character. And this intolerable demand was made on me by cultured men and women whose convictions I could not adopt and whose injustice I thought I felt, but could not define. I was to be prohibited from alluding to pithy Bible passages and from using naive expressions out of the chronicles. I was to forget I had read Geiler von Kaisersberg¹⁸ and to refrain from employing proverbs that hit the nail right on the head without shilly-shallying. I was to dispense with everything my youthful enthusiasm had embraced, and I felt paralyzed in the core of my being, so that I could scarcely talk about the most ordinary things. Besides, I heard that one should speak as one writes and write as one speaks, whereas speaking and writing seemed two entirely different things to me, each entitled to its own rights. And indeed I heard many things in the Meissen dialect that would not have looked particularly good on paper.

Anyone hearing how much decisive influence was being exercised here on a young student by cultured men and women, scholars, and other persons who took delight in elegant society, would immediately be convinced we were in Leipzig, even if this were not stated. Each of the German universities has its special character, for no universal culture can pervade our fatherland, and so every locality persists in its own ways and overemphasizes its characteristic features; and the same is true of the universities. In Jena and Halle crudeness was at its height. Physical strength, skill in fencing, and the wildest readiness to take the law into one's own hands were the order of the day there, and such conditions can only be maintained and propagated by the most vulgar reveling and rioting. The relationship of the students to the inhabitants of those towns, differences notwithstanding, was identical insofar as the wild outsider had no respect for the citizen and viewed himself as

a special entity with the privilege of being as independent and insolent as he liked. In Leipzig, on the other hand, a student really had to be gallant if he wanted any contact with its rich inhabitants, who were sticklers for good manners.

To be sure, any gallantry that is not the efflorescence of life on the grand scale will appear hobbled, rigid, and perhaps, from a certain point of view, absurd, for which reason those wild huntsmen on the Saale¹⁹ considered themselves much superior to the tame shepherds on the Pleisse. Zachariä's *Braggadocio* will always remain a valuable document because it vividly portrays the manners and morals of that time. Indeed, his poems generally must be welcome reading for anyone interested in the nature of social life and activity of that time, which, for all its weaknesses, had the endearing quality of a childlike innocence.

Customs that are rooted in a given situation are always tenacious, and in my time there was still much that recalled Zachariä's epic. There was only one of our fellow citizens in academe who considered himself rich and independent enough to tweak public opinion by the nose. He drank a pledge of "brother-in-lawhood"²⁰ with all the hackney coachmen and then, as though they were the gentlemen, would have them sit inside the vehicle while he ascended the driver's box himself. He even thought it great sport to overturn the two-wheeled chaises, since he could pay for the damage and any incidental bruises. However, he did not insult anyone, but just seemed to be deriding the public en masse. Once, on a very good day for promenading, he and an accomplice appropriated the donkeys belonging to the miller of St. Thomas Place, and the two of them, well dressed in shoes and stockings, rode very gravely around the town on them, gaped at by all the strollers swarming on the Glacis-Promenade. When some respectable people remonstrated with him, he declared quite innocently that he only wanted to see how the Lord Christ would have fared under similar circumstances. Yet he found no imitators and few comrades.

For a student of some means and distinction had every reason to defer to the merchant class and, since the colony²¹ provided him with a model of French manners, to take special pains in observing the proper outward forms. The professors, with comfortable private incomes and good benefices, were not dependent on their students; and many native sons, having been educated at the crown schools or other preparatory academies, and hopeful of advancement, did not dare to renounce the traditional customs. The proximity of Dresden, surveillance from there, and the genuine piety of the inspectors-general of higher education could not fail to have a moral, indeed a religious influence.

At first these social graces did not repel me. My letters of recommendation had introduced me to good families, and I was also received well by the circles associated with them. However, I soon was made

to feel that this society objected to many things about me, and not only was I supposed to dress to their taste, but also speak like them. Yet I could plainly see that none of this would help much to win me the education and mental improvement I expected from my university sojourn. So I began to grow lax and neglect such social obligations as visits and other niceties, and would have withdrawn from all such relationships even sooner if awe and respect had not bound me to Aulic Councilor Böhme, and trust and affection to his wife. Unfortunately, the husband did not have the happy gift of getting on with young people, winning their confidence and giving them guidance for their immediate needs. I never profited from visiting him, but, on the other hand, his wife showed a sincere interest in me. Her poor health kept her shut in at home. Many an evening she invited me to come and, since I was not uncouth, but still did not really possess the so-called "social graces," she could instruct and improve me in various little external matters. One lone woman friend spent the evenings with her, and was a good deal more overbearing and pedantic than she, for which reason I disliked the woman intensely and, to spite her, often reverted to the poor manners of which Madame Böhme had already cured me. Meanwhile, they were still quite patient with me, and taught me piquet, l'hombre,²² and other games of the kind one is absolutely required to know and play in society.

But what Madame Böhme most strongly influenced was my taste, to be sure in a negative way, and here she was in complete agreement with the critics. The Gottschedian waters had inundated the German world with a veritable deluge, even threatening to submerge the highest ranges. It takes time for such a flood to subside and for the mud to dry, and since every epoch has no end of imitative poets, their imitations of insipid, watery poems produced a heap of rubbish that by now has disappeared almost without a trace. Calling the bad bad was therefore the greatest sport, nay, a triumph for critics at that time. Whoever had any common sense, a superficial knowledge of the ancients, and a somewhat closer acquaintance with the moderns felt equipped with a standard to apply everywhere. Madame Böhme was a cultured woman who opposed the insignificant, weak, and vulgar; besides, she was the wife of a man so hostile to poetry in general that he rejected even what little of it she sanctioned. She did indeed listen patiently for a while when I ventured to recite verses or prose written by notable, well-established authors (for I still memorized everything that even halfway pleased me), but her indulgence was not of long duration. The first work that she quite horribly disparaged was Weisse's *Modish Poets*,²³ which was being frequently performed just then, to great applause, and had particularly delighted me. On closer inspection, to be sure, I had to admit she was right. A few times I had also dared to recite some of

my own poems to her, anonymously, and they fared no better than the rest. And so, in a short time, the lovely, colorful meadows below the German Parnassus, where I had so gladly strolled, were mercilessly mowed down for me, and I was even forced to help turn over the drying hay myself, and scoffingly call something dead that had recently afforded me such lively pleasure.

Her teachings were unwittingly reinforced by Professor Morus, an extraordinarily gentle and friendly man whom I met at Aulic Councilor Ludwig's table, where he very courteously granted my request for the privilege of visiting him. While getting information on antiquity from him, I did not conceal my delight in some modern writings, and he then spoke more calmly on this subject than Madame Böhme, but, what was worse, also more profoundly than she. He opened my eyes, to my greatest vexation, but later to my astonishment, and finally to my benefit.

In addition there were the jeremiads with which Gellert, in his composition course, would admonish us to avoid poetry. He wanted only prose essays and always graded these first. He treated my verses as a mere dreary adjunct and, worse than that, even my prose found little favor in his eyes, for in my old way I would always make a little novel of it, preferably in epistolary form. The subjects were passionate, the style beyond that of normal prose, and the contents, to be sure, probably not very indicative of any profound knowledge of human beings on the author's part. Therefore I received very little encouragement from our teacher, although he reviewed my work as meticulously as that of the others, made corrections in red ink, and occasionally added a moral comment. It was my pleasure to keep several pages of this kind for a long time, but unfortunately, in the course of years, they eventually disappeared from among my papers.

The right pedagogical procedure for older persons would be neither to forbid nor spoil anything that delights a young man, whatever it may be, unless they simultaneously have something else to insert or introduce as a substitute. Everybody protested against my hobbies and inclinations, but what was recommended to replace them was either so foreign to me that I could not see its merits or so familiar that I thought it no better than what had been reviled. As a result I grew thoroughly confused, and hoped for the best from a course of lectures by Ernesti on Cicero's *De oratore*. I did learn something from it, but was still not enlightened about what I really wanted to know. I demanded a standard of judgment, and was forced to conclude that nobody actually had one, for people did not agree even when examples were brought forward. And whence was judgment to come, when so many faults were counted up against the pleasant works of a man like Wieland,²⁴ which had wholly captivated us younger people?

Amidst such manifold diffusion, nay, disintegration of my life and studies, it so happened that I took my regular midday meal at the house of Aulic Councilor Ludwig.²⁵ He was professor of medicine and botany, and, except for Morus, the company there consisted exclusively of beginning or almost fully trained medical students. Now in this house I only heard conversation about medicine or natural history, and my imagination was drawn to quite a different field. I heard the names of Haller, Linnaeus, and Buffon²⁶ mentioned most respectfully. Even if arguments sometimes arose about errors these had allegedly committed, still, in honor of the acknowledged abundance of their merits, everything would eventually settle down again. These subjects were entertaining and significant, and they gripped my attention. Gradually I became acquainted with many new words, a whole extensive terminology, and I was all the happier to learn it because now I was hesitant about writing down another verse, however unbidden it came to me, or about reading a poem, for fear it might momentarily please me and then soon afterwards have to be declared bad, like so much else.

This uncertainty of taste and judgment disturbed me more every day, until at last I grew desperate. Of my youthful works, I had taken along the ones I considered the best, partly hoping to win some fame, partly to have a surer test for my progress. But I found myself in the painful situation one is placed in when what is required is a total change of mind and renunciation of everything one has previously loved and esteemed. After some time and many struggles, I was seized with such great scorn for all my finished and unfinished works that one day I burned them all, poetry and prose, plans, sketches, and drafts, in the kitchen fireplace. The smoke filled the whole house and caused our good old landlady no little fear and terror.

Book Seven

A great deal has been written about the state of literature at that time, indeed, probably quite enough to inform any person fully if he is interested; and the judgment passed on it seems to be a fairly unanimous one. What I presently propose to say on the subject, in a piecemeal and desultory fashion, will involve not so much my estimation of the specific nature of this literature as my own personal reactions to it. Therefore I plan to speak first of things that particularly stir up the public, of the two hereditary foes of all comfortable living and all joyful, confident, thriving poesy: I mean satire and criticism.

In peaceful times every man wants to live as he pleases; the citizen wants to pursue his trade or business and afterwards enjoy himself. Thus an author too will gladly write something and make his works known, hoping for praise if not for payment, because he thinks he has done a good, useful thing. In this sort of peace the citizen is disturbed by the satirist, and the writer by the critic, and so the placid community is brought into unpleasant ferment.

The literary epoch into which I was born developed from the preceding one through dissension. Germany had for so long been inundated with foreigners, infiltrated by other nations, and dependent on foreign languages in scholarly and governmental proceedings that it could not possibly cultivate its own tongue. Not only was German deluged with many new concepts but also, both necessarily and unnecessarily, with innumerable foreign words, and alien expressions and idioms had to be used even for quite familiar things. With their culture neglected as a result of nearly two centuries of unfortunate and tumultuous conditions, the Germans went to the French for schooling in good manners and to the Romans for training in dignified speech. But this had to be transferred to the mother tongue, and the direct application of those idioms as well as their halfway translation into German made both the social and official styles ridiculous. Moreover, the metaphorical expressions of the southern languages were taken over to excess and their use became terribly exaggerated. In the same way, the aristocratic demeanor of princely Roman citizens was grafted onto the small-town conditions of German scholars, and no one felt at home anywhere, least of all on native soil.

But works of genius arose even in this epoch, and so did the old untrammelled German spirit, which insisted with all sincere earnestness that one should write purely and naturally, without mixing in foreign words, and only as dictated by general understanding. However, these

praiseworthy efforts threw the gates wide open to the national tendency to flat insipidness, indeed made a hole in the dam through which the great waters would soon be rushing. Meanwhile a rigid pedantry held firm in all four branches of university learning, until at last, much later, it found no refuge in any of them.

Individuals with good minds, freely inquiring children of nature, consequently had two things to practice on and work against, and to make mischievous fun of, since they were not matters of great importance. These were, first, a language marred by foreign words, word-formations, and idioms; and second, the worthlessness of those writings where the concern was to avoid such defects. It did not occur to anyone that one of these evils was being called on to combat the other.

Liscow, a bold young man, began by personally attacking a silly, shallow writer, whose inept behavior soon gave him occasion to proceed with greater vehemence.²⁷ Then he reached out farther and continued to direct his mockery against specific persons and objects that he despised, and not only tried to make them look despicable but actually pursued them with passionate hatred. But his career was a short one; he quite soon died, disappearing from sight while still a restless, erratic young man. What little he accomplished nevertheless demonstrated a talent and character that evidently struck his countrymen as estimable. In any case, Germans have always shown special piety toward prematurely departed, promising talents. Suffice it to say that Liscow was praised and recommended to us right away as an excellent satirist, one who could even be ranked ahead of the universally popular Rabener.²⁸ We did not, to be sure, see much benefit to ourselves in this, because all we got out of his writings was that he had found the absurd to be absurd, which was no more than natural.

Rabener, who had been brought up well and received a good education, had a cheerful and by no means passionate or hateful nature; he espoused general satire. His censure of the so-called "vices and follies" is based on the clear observations of his cool common sense and on his definite moral conception of how the world should be. His criticism of mistakes and shortcomings is inoffensive and cheerful; and he seeks to excuse even the slight boldness of his writings with the assumption that it is not a fruitless undertaking to try to improve fools through ridicule.

A personality like Rabener's will probably never be duplicated. We see him do his duty as an efficient, punctilious public official²⁹ and thereby earn the good opinion of his fellow citizens and the confidence of his superiors; on the side, he finds recreation in abandoning himself to a cheerful disrespect for everything that immediately surrounds him. Pedantic scholars, vain youths, every sort of narrow-mindedness and

conceit are the butt more of his jokes than of his mockery, and when he does mock, it is not expressive of scorn. He jests every bit as much about his own condition, his misfortune, his life, and his death.

The way in which this author treats his subjects is not very esthetic. He may have enough variety in outward form, but he makes altogether too much use of direct irony, that is, praising the reprehensible and reprehending the praiseworthy, which is a rhetorical device that should be used very rarely. In the long run it exasperates intelligent people and confuses dull ones; but of course it suits the large class in between, who are enabled without any special mental effort to fancy themselves cleverer than others. What he does, however, and the way he does it testifies to his honesty, cheerfulness, and evenness of temper, which never fail to captivate us. The unconditional acclaim he received in his own time was due to these moral qualities.

It was only natural for people to seek and find models for his generalized characterizations, and the result was that some individuals complained about him. His rather overlong apologies to the effect that his satire was not personal testify to the chagrin this caused him. Several of his letters merit him the laurel wreath as an author and a man. The confidential letter in which he describes the siege of Dresden and tells how he lost his house, his belongings, his writings, and his wigs, without his composure being shaken in the least, or his cheerfulness dimmed, is most estimable, even though the contemporary Dresdeners could not forgive him this happy disposition. The letter in which he speaks of his ebbing strength and approaching death is worthy of all respect, and Rabener deserves to be honored as a saint by all cheerful, reasonable, down-to-earth people.

I tear myself away from him reluctantly, adding only this much: his satire is aimed entirely at the middle classes. Here and there he lets it be seen that he also knows the upper classes, but does not consider it advisable to touch on them. It can be said that he had no successor, and that there has been no one who might consider himself equal or even similar to him.

Now to criticism! and, as a matter of fact, first of all to the attempts at theory. It is not irrelevant for us to say that in those days hypothetical thought had fled from the world into religion, and scarcely even appeared in ethics; and no one had any notion about a supreme artistic principle. Gottsched's *Critique of Poetry*³⁰ was put into our hands, which we found quite useful and instructive, for it provided historical information about all the genres, as well as about meter and its various cadences. Poetic genius was taken for granted! Moreover the poet should be well informed, indeed learned, should have taste, and so on. Eventually we were directed to Horace's *Poetics*; we looked at indi-

vidual golden passages in this estimable work with respectful amazement, but did not have the least idea what to make of it in its entirety or how to use it.

The Swiss³¹ came on the scene as antagonists of Gottsched, which meant they were obliged to do something different and try to accomplish something better; and we were told they actually were superior. Brei-tinger's *Critique of Poetry* was taken up. Now we had come to something of broader expanse, but in reality it was only a bigger maze, and since we trusted the excellent man who bade us wander about in it, we quite wore ourselves out for him. Let a brief summary justify my words.

No principle had been found for poetry itself; it was too fugitive and spiritual for that. Painting, as an art that could be captured with the eye and followed step for step with the external senses, seemed more amenable to this end. The English and the French had already theorized about the visual arts, and now it was thought that poetry could be given its foundation by means of a parallel drawn with them. The former placed images before one's eyes, the latter before one's imagination. Poetic images, therefore, were the first things to be considered. The beginning was made with similes; descriptions followed, and everything capable of being presented to the external senses came under discussion.

Images, then! Where should these images be taken from except from nature? The painter obviously imitated nature; why not the poet as well? But nature as it is cannot be imitated, for it contains too much that is insignificant and unworthy. So one must choose—but what determines the choice? One must seek the significant—but what is significant?

I dare say the Swiss considered their answer to this for a long time, because they certainly came up with an idea that was simultaneously strange, pleasant, and amusing when they stated that the most significant thing is always the new thing; and after thinking this over for a while they concluded that the newest thing of all is that which is marvelous.

Now they had the poetic requisites fairly well assembled; but they still had to consider the fact that a marvel can be empty and meaningless for human beings. Meaning is an essential requirement and (they said) must be of a moral kind, clearly leading to man's betterment, so that a poem reaches its ultimate goal when, in addition to all its other accomplishments, it becomes edifying. The various genres were now to be tested against all these requirements, and the one which not only imitated nature but was also marvelous, and had moral purpose and usefulness besides, was to be accounted the first and uppermost. And, after much reflection, this great preeminence was finally ascribed, with the utmost conviction, to the Aesopian fable.

As odd as such a conclusion may seem to us now, it nevertheless had a most decided influence on the best minds. That Gellert, and afterwards Lichtwer,³² devoted themselves to this genre, that Lessing himself attempted to work in it, that so many others turned their talents in this direction attests to the credit it had won for itself. Theory and practice always influence each other: from works it can be seen what people are thinking, and from thoughts it can be predicted what they will do.

However, we must not leave our Swiss theory behind without giving it its just due. Bodmer, for all his efforts, remained a child throughout his life as far as both theory and practice are concerned. Breitingger was an excellent, learned, perspicacious man who, when he looked at things properly, was not unaware of the total requirements for a literary work; indeed it can be shown that he probably had a dim realization of the defects of his method. Remarkable, for instance, is his question about whether a certain poem by König³³ on August II's festive encampment is really a poem; and his answer shows good sense also. Although he starts out from a false position and lets it determine almost his whole course, the fact that he nevertheless stumbles onto the main point may serve to vindicate him completely: He finds himself compelled at the end of his book, in an addendum, as it were, to recommend the depiction of manners, characters, emotions, in a word, of the inner person; and this, after all, is poetry's primary concern.

It is easy to imagine young minds becoming confused by such misplaced maxims, half-understood laws, and fragmented doctrines. We relied on examples, and fared no better with them either: the foreign examples were too remote, as were the ancient ones, and the best of the domestic examples always evinced a strongly marked individuality, with virtues that could not be appropriated and errors that one was naturally afraid of slipping into. This was a desperate situation for anyone who felt a productive potential within himself.

A close examination of what was lacking in German poetry reveals that it was substance, and, to be precise, substance of national import; for there had never been a lack of talent. Here it suffices to mention Günther, who may be called a poet in every sense of the word.³⁴ A decided talent, he was gifted with perceptiveness, imagination, memory, the ability to grasp and depict vividly. He was productive in the highest degree, adept at meter, witty, intelligent, and broadly educated. In brief, he had everything necessary for creating out of life, common actual life, a second, poetic life. We admire the great ease with which, in his occasional poems, he heightens all the situations with his feeling and embellishes them with fitting sentiments, images, and historical or legendary materials. Anything crude and wild in them is attributable to

his time, his manner of life, and especially his character, or, if you will, his lack of character. He was unable to curb himself, and so his life and his poetry disintegrated simultaneously.

By his immature conduct Günther forfeited the chance of getting a position at the court of August II, where, to supplement all the other pomp, they were looking for a court poet, who could give tone and embellishment to the festivities and perpetuate a passing splendor. Von König had better manners and luck, and he occupied the position with dignity and much success.

In all sovereign states the substance for literature filters down from above, and perhaps the first worthy provincial, if not national, subject to present itself to a poet was the festive encampment at Mühlberg. Two kings greeting each other in the presence of a large army, surrounded by their entire court and war paraphernalia, well-maintained troops, a mock battle, festivities of all kinds: this was sufficient exercise for the external senses and more than enough subject matter for descriptive and pictorial poetry.

Admittedly, the thing was inwardly flawed, since it was only pomp and show, from which no deed could emerge. The only persons to draw attention to themselves were the two of top rank, and even if someone else had done so, the poet could not give prominence to any one individual, for fear of offending others. He had to consult the official court calendar, and therefore his sketching of the personages was a rather dry business; indeed, his contemporaries themselves reproached him with having described the horses better than the people. But should this not rather redound to his praise, for having proved his artistic ability when a subject did present itself? In any case, he seems to have soon become aware of the main difficulty, for the poem never got beyond the first canto.

In the midst of such studies and observations I was surprised by an unexpected event which thwarted my laudable intention of becoming acquainted right away with our modern literature. My countryman Johann Georg Schlosser,³⁵ after having spent strenuous and industrious years at the university, had, to be sure, set out upon a conventional legal career in Frankfurt, but for various reasons he could not adapt his active and analytical mind to the circumstances. Somewhat precipitously, he accepted a position as private secretary to Duke Louis of Württemberg, who was sojourning in Treptow.³⁶ This sovereign had the reputation of being one of those princes who with noble independence of mind were trying to enlighten and improve their own families and the commonalty, and to unite them in the pursuit of higher goals. It was this Duke Louis who had written to Rousseau for advice on rearing children and received the famous answer that begins with the dubious phrase, "*Si j'avois le malheur d'être né prince.*"—

Schlosser was now expected, if not exactly to manage both the sovereign's affairs and the education of his children, at any rate to offer his willing assistance with word and deed. This noble-minded young man, who was full of good will and aimed at moral perfection, might easily have put people off with his cool, stern air; but instead he attracted them with his unusually fine knowledge of literature, his ability in foreign languages, and his skill in written expression, whether verse or prose. These things made life with him more agreeable. His intention of passing through Leipzig was announced to me, and I awaited him eagerly. He came, and stopped at a little inn or tavern located in the Brühl, the proprietor of which was named Schönkopf. The latter was married to a woman from Frankfurt, and although for most of the year he had few patrons, and his establishment was too small for overnight guests, he was visited at fair time by many Frankfurt people, who would take meals there and, if need be, quarters too. As soon as Schlosser let me know about his arrival, I hurried there to see him. I hardly remembered having seen him before, and discovered a well-built young man with a round face and features that were compact but not stubby. The forehead arching between his black curls and eyebrows indicated seriousness, sternness, and possibly stubbornness. In a way he was my opposite, and that was probably the basis of our lasting friendship. I had the greatest respect for his talents, particularly since I could plainly see that he was altogether superior to me in the sure way he went about accomplishing things. My evident respect and confidence strengthened his affection and fostered his indulgent treatment of my lively, volatile, and always active nature, which was in such contrast to his own. He diligently studied the English poets, Pope being less his model than his focal point. As an answer to that poet's "Essay on Man" he had written a poem in the same form and meter which was to make Christianity triumph over Pope's deism. From among the great stock of papers he carried around with him he let me see verse and prose writings in all languages, which I felt challenged to imitate, and was very much perturbed about this. Then immediately activity came to my rescue: I wrote poems addressed to him in French, English, and Italian, taking my subject matter from our conversations, which were never anything but significant and educational.

Schlosser did not want to leave Leipzig without having seen the noted men there face to face. I was glad to take him to those I knew; and in this way I was also honorably enabled to meet those I had not yet visited. As an educated and already professionally established man he was respectfully received and was quite capable of contributing his share to the conversation. I must not omit our visit to Gottsched, because it illustrates this man's manner and mentality. He was very decently lodged in the second floor of the Golden Bear, where the elder

Breitkopf³⁷ had guaranteed him a life-long domicile on account of the many advantages brought to the business by Gottsched's writings, translations, and other assistance.

We had ourselves announced. A servant led us into a large room, saying that his master would come at once. I do not know whether we misunderstood a gesture he made, but in any case we thought he had directed us into the adjacent room. There we entered on a strange scene: At that moment in came Gottsched from the opposite door—that tall, broad giant of a man—in a green damask dressing gown lined with red taffeta; but his enormous bald head was uncovered. That was to be remedied immediately, for the servant leapt in from a side door carrying a huge full-bottomed wig on his hand (the curls were elbow-length) and held out this head adornment to his master with a frightened look. Not showing the slightest irritation, Gottsched took the periwig from his servant's arm and, while swinging it very dexterously onto his head with his left hand, with the right paw gave the poor fellow such a box on the ear that he reeled out of the door, just as happens in comedies—whereupon the worthy patriarch quite gravely pressed us to sit down and engaged in rather a long discourse with perfect decorum.

As long as Schlosser remained in Leipzig, I dined with him daily and became acquainted with a very agreeable group of table companions. There were several Livonians, and the son of Head Court Chaplain Hermann in Dresden, afterwards burgomaster in Leipzig,³⁸ with their tutors; Aulic Councilor Pfeil,³⁹ author of *Count von P.*, a pendant to Gellert's *Swedish Countess*; Zachariä,⁴⁰ a brother of the poet, and Krebel,⁴¹ the editor of geographic and genealogical reference books. They were mannerly, cheerful, and friendly men. Zachariä was the quietest one; Pfeil an elegant man with something of the statesman about him, but not affected, and very good-humored; Krebel a regular Falstaff, tall, portly, blond, and with bright, protuberant, sky-blue eyes, always jolly and in good spirits. Partly on Schlosser's account, and partly because of my own open good nature and accommodating ways, these persons without exception treated me most courteously, and I was easily persuaded to share their table in the future. I actually did stay with them after Schlosser's departure, gave up the Ludwig table, and was even more pleased to be in this exclusive company because I liked the daughter of the house very much, quite a neat, pretty girl, and this gave me the opportunity to exchange glances with her, an enjoyment that I had neither sought nor chanced to find since the misfortune with Gretchen. I spent the hours of the midday meal cheerfully and profitably with my friends. Krebel really liked me very much and knew how to tease and stir me up, but gently. Pfeil, on the other hand, showed his affection in a serious way, and tried to guide and influence my judgment about many things.

It was in this circle, through conversations, examples, and my own

meditations, that I became aware of how the first step in escaping from the watery, prolix, null epoch had to be taken through definiteness, precision, and brevity. In the style that had prevailed up to now, the ordinary could not be distinguished from the better, because everything was flattened out. There were writers who had already tried to escape from this long-winded evil, with more or less success. Haller and Ramler⁴² were by nature inclined to condense; Lessing⁴³ and Wieland⁴⁴ were brought to do so by reflection. The former gradually became quite epigrammatic in his poems, concise in *Minna*, and laconic in *Emilia Galotti*; only later did he return to the cheerful naiveté that becomes him so well in *Nathan*. Wieland, who was still occasionally prolix in *Agathon*, *Don Sylvio*, and the *Comic Tales*, becomes miraculously compact and precise, with great charm, in *Musarion* and *Idris*. Klopstock was not without prolixity in the first cantos of the *Messiah*; in his odes and other short poems he was terse, also in his tragedies. In competing with the ancients, especially Tacitus, he found himself increasingly forced into narrow limits, so that in the end he became incomprehensible and unenjoyable. Gerstenberg,⁴⁵ a fine but bizarre talent, also disciplined himself, but while his merit was esteemed, on the whole it gave little pleasure. Gleim, by nature prolix and complacent, became concise barely once, in his *War Songs*.⁴⁶ Ramler was really more of a critic than a poet: He began to collect what Germans had accomplished in the field of lyric poetry.⁴⁷ Then he found that hardly a single poem completely satisfied him, and he had to delete, edit, and alter in order to give these things some sort of form. In the process he made himself almost as many enemies as there are poets and lovers of poetry, since everyone really only recognizes himself by his defects, and the public is more likely to be interested in something individual, though imperfect, than in what has been produced or improved according to a universal rule of taste. Metrics were still in their cradle at that time, and nobody knew a means of shortening their infancy. Poetic prose gained the upper hand. Gessner⁴⁸ and Klopstock found many imitators, but there were again others who demanded syllabic quality after all and transposed this prose into comprehensible meters. But neither did this suit anyone, for there had to be omissions and additions, and the original prose was always considered better. However, the search for compactness in all this eventually made criticism possible, because when significant features are more closely juxtaposed, they finally admit of a sure comparison. A further result was that various genuinely poetic forms arose: for since the intention was to portray only what was necessary in every subject treated, each subject had to be treated suitably, and in this way, although without conscious design, the methods of depiction multiplied. To be sure, many of them were grotesque, and many of these attempts failed.

Without any doubt Wieland possessed the finest natural talent of

them all. His early development⁴⁹ was in those ideal regions where youth is so inclined to tarry. However, when they were spoiled for him by what is called experience—encounters with the world and with women—he went over headlong to the side of reality and amused himself and others by setting the two worlds at odds. His talent was most beautifully displayed in this light sword play between jest and seriousness. How many of his brilliant works came out during my university years! *Musarion* impressed me the most, and I can still remember the spot where I saw the first specimen sheets, which Oeser⁵⁰ gave to me. Here I believed that I was seeing antiquity freshly reborn. All the graphic powers of Wieland's genius were displayed here most perfectly; and since the Timon-like Phantias, after being condemned to an unhappy state of abstinence, is once again reconciled with his girl and the world, one does not mind living through his misanthropic period with him. Moreover these works showed a cheerful aversion to elevated sentiments that was by no means unacceptable, for the latter are easily applied to life incorrectly and then often smack of fanaticism. One forgave the author for making fun of things one considered true and sacred, especially since that was his way of showing his own constant concern about these matters.

It can be seen from the first volumes of the *Universal German Library*⁵¹ how wretchedly the criticism of the time undertook to deal with such works. The *Comic Tales* receive honorable mention, but there is no trace of insight into the character of the genre itself. The reviewer, like everyone else at his time, had formed his taste on the basis of examples. He did not take into consideration that one must, first and foremost, keep the noble, beautiful original model in mind when judging such parodistic works, in order to see whether the parodist really has found a weak and comic side to it, or, while seeming to imitate, has perhaps invented something new and excellent himself. Not a scrap of anything like that is there; instead, the poems are praised or criticized passage by passage. The reviewer himself admits that he has marked too many excellent passages for them all to be quoted in print. When at last the extremely meritorious translation of Shakespeare is met with the cry, "By rights, a man like Shakespeare should not have been translated at all," then that is quite enough to make one understand how hopelessly backward the *Universal German Library* was in matters of taste, and to explain why young people who were animated by true feeling had to look around for other guiding stars.

The Germans searched everywhere for material, and this would then more or less determine the form. They had treated few if any national subjects. Schlegel's *Arminius*⁵² only hinted at these. The idyllic tendency spread endlessly. Everyone thought he could do something similar to Gessner's idylls because they lacked individuality, although they were

very charming and of a childlike ingenuousness. Also based simply on what was universally human were those poems that ostensibly depicted foreign nationalities, for example, the *Jewish Pastorals*¹¹ and in general anything patriarchal or otherwise pertaining to the Old Testament. Bodmer's *Noahiad* perfectly symbolized that flood of water swelling around the German Parnassus, which ebbed but slowly. The trifling Anacreontic nonsense also permitted countless mediocre minds to flounder about in verbosity. The precision of Horace compelled the Germans, but only slowly, to emulate him. Mock heroic epics, mostly patterned after Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, did not serve to usher in better times either.

I must mention another delusion here whose effect was just as serious as it must seem ridiculous when held up for inspection. By now the Germans had sufficient historical knowledge of all the genres in which the various nations had won distinction. This framework, which really destroys the conception of what poetry intrinsically is, had been quite completely constructed by Gottsched in his *Critique of Poetry*, where he had also pointed out that German poets had already succeeded in supplying all these categories with excellent works. And so it went on. The collection grew more considerable every year, but every year one work would drive the other from the niche where it had previously shone. By now we possessed, if not Homers, at any rate Virgils and Miltons, and if not a Pindar, at any rate a Horace; and there was no dearth of Theocrituses. Thus we were lulled with external comparisons, while the mass of poetic works kept increasing until finally an internal comparison could also be made.

Matters of taste may have been on a very unsure footing, but it can certainly not be denied that something called "common sense" began to make itself strongly felt within the Protestant parts of Germany and Switzerland. Scholastic philosophy has the lasting merit of having arranged every possible subject of human inquiry according to accepted principles, in a pleasing order, and under specific categories; but with its frequent obscurity and the apparent uselessness of its content, the inopportune application of its basically respectable method, and its great extension over too many subjects, it had become for most people alien, unenjoyable, and, in the end, dispensable. Many a person became convinced that nature had surely endowed him with the necessary plain good sense for getting a clear enough understanding of objects to be able to deal with them and use them for his own and others' benefit. Did he then really need to trouble himself laboriously about abstractions and investigate the possible connections between some very remote things which do not especially concern us? People made the attempt, they opened their eyes, looked straight ahead, were alert, industrious, active, and believed that if a person judged and acted correctly in his

own sphere, he might also presume to discuss other, less immediate matters.

According to this view, everyone was entitled not only to philosophize, but also, by and by, to consider himself a philosopher. Philosophy, then, was more or less healthy and mature common sense venturing over to the universal and making pronouncements about inner and outer experiences. The fact that these writings and oral utterances demonstrated clear intelligence and a particularly moderate approach (for the middle road and the fair treatment of all opinions were considered absolutely the right thing) won them respect and trust, and eventually philosophers were to be found in all branches of the university, indeed in all social classes and in all lines of work.

Along this way the theologians could not but lean toward the so-called "natural religion," and when the question arose concerning the adequacy of nature's light to advance us in the knowledge of God and the improvement and ennoblement of our own selves, they were usually bold enough to decide in its favor without much hesitation. Thanks to that principle of moderation, all positive religions were given equal rights, with the result that one became as neutral and unreliable as the other. However, on the whole no changes were made, and since the Bible is so replete with substance that it provides more material for reflection and more opportunity for observations about the human condition than any other book, it could certainly continue, as always, to be the foundation for all sermons and other religious discourse.

But this work, just like those of secular authors, faced a peculiar fate, which, as time passed, could not be avoided. That is to say, it had previously been accepted on good faith that this book of books had been composed in one single spirit, indeed that it had been inspired and, as it were, dictated by the divine spirit. Yet the dissimilarities of the various parts had long since been alternately criticized and defended by unbelievers and believers. Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Germans had attacked the Bible with more or less vehemence, acumen, impudence, and capriciousness; and serious, respectable men in these nations had risen equally to its defense. For my part, I loved and revered it, because I owed almost my whole development in moral culture to it, and all of it, stories, teachings, symbols, parables, had impressed itself on me deeply and influenced me in one way or another. Therefore I disliked those unjust, mocking, and perverting attacks; but matters had already progressed so far at that time that one was very glad to accept, as the main defense for many passages, the argument that God had adapted Himself to the mentality and comprehension of men, indeed, that the writers for all their divine inspiration had not been able to deny their character and individuality, and so Amos the cowherd did not

speak the same language as Isaiah, who is supposed to have been a prince.

Especially in view of the ever-increasing knowledge of the languages, it was very natural for such sentiments and convictions to lead to the kind of study that involves closer examination of Oriental localities, nationalities, natural products, and phenomena and tries in this way to visualize those ancient times. Michaelis brought the whole force of his talent and knowledge to this endeavor. Travel reports became an effective auxiliary to the interpretation of Holy Scripture, and modern travelers were supplied with many questions to which they were supposed to find answers and thus give testimony for the prophets and apostles.

On all sides, meanwhile, efforts were being made to regard the Holy Scriptures in a natural way and to make their basic manner of thought and expression more universally comprehensible. It was hoped that this historical-critical view would serve to remove many objections, abolish many stumbling blocks, and render all shallow mockery ineffective. Yet in some men quite the opposite mentality came to the fore. They chose the most obscure and mysterious writings as the object of their contemplation and tried, certainly not to elucidate, but rather to corroborate these by means of their own conjectures, calculations, and other strange and ingenious combinations. And, as far as prophetic passages were concerned, they tried to prove that these had been fulfilled so as to justify a faith in what they expected next.

The venerable Bengel⁵⁴ had been able to gain considerable acceptance for his efforts with the Revelation of St. John, thanks to his reputation as a reasonable, upright, God-fearing man, indeed a man above reproach. Profound minds are obliged to live both in the past and the future. The world's ordinary activity is meaningless for them unless they can gratefully hail prophecies that have been fulfilled in the course of time up to the present or that will be fulfilled in the immediate or far distant future. From this there arises a coherence not found in history, which seems to record nothing but haphazard floundering back and forth with a necessarily closed circle. Doctor Crusius⁵⁵ was among those to whom the prophetic part of Holy Scripture appealed most, because here the two opposite properties of the human mind, its feeling and its reason, are set into motion simultaneously. Many young men had been won over to this teaching and already made quite a considerable group, which became even more conspicuous when Ernesti and his disciples threatened not only to illuminate the darkness so congenial to such people, but to dispel it completely. From this arose quarrels, hatred, persecution, and many other disagreeable things. I adhered to the party of clarity and tried to adopt its principles and methods, al-

though I rather suspected that this very laudable, rational method of interpretation would eventually destroy the poetic along with the prophetic meaning of those writings.

Nearer to the interests of those who devoted themselves to German literature and belles lettres were the efforts of men like Jerusalem,⁵⁶ Zollikofer,⁵⁷ and Spalding,⁵⁸ who used good, pure style in their sermons and treatises. This was an attempt to win for religion and moral philosophy, its close associate, approval and attachment also among persons with a certain amount of good sense and taste. It became absolutely necessary to write in an agreeable manner, and since this must be comprehensible above all else, there now emerged authors on all sides who undertook to write about their studies and their specialty clearly, distinctly, and forcefully for connoisseur and common reader alike.

Following the lead of a foreigner, Tissot,⁵⁹ the physicians also began making a diligent effort to affect the general development of culture. Haller, Unzer,⁶⁰ and Zimmermann⁶¹ exerted a very great influence, and whatever may be said against them individually, especially the last-named, they were very effective in their time. And that is what should be discussed in histories, and above all in biographies, for a man's lasting significance is not in what he leaves behind, but in what he has actively done and profitably used, and has stimulated others to do and use.

Lawyers had been accustomed from youth on to an abstruse style that was preserved in the most outlandish way in every executive office ranging from the chancery of an independent knight up to the Imperial Diet at Regensburg, and so they could not easily attain any freedom; moreover the subjects they had to treat were connected with very specific outward forms and consequently with a specific style. Yet the younger von Moser⁶² had already shown himself to be a free and original author; and Pütter,⁶³ by virtue of the clarity of his presentation, had also introduced clarity into his subject matter and the style in which it was to be treated. Everything that came out under his aegis was distinguished by this. And now the philosophers themselves, if they wanted to be popular, were also compelled to write clearly and comprehensibly. Mendelssohn⁶⁴ and Garve⁶⁵ appeared on the scene and aroused universal interest and admiration.

Along with the advancement of the German language and style in every field, there also developed an ability to criticize, and we admire the reviews from those days of works on religious and moral subjects, and on medical ones as well. Conversely, we notice that reviews of poems and other things relating to belles lettres must be deemed, if not contemptible, at best very weak. This is even true of the *Letters on Literature* and the *Universal German Library*,⁶⁶ as well as of the *Library*

of *Belles Lettres*,⁶⁷ and one could very easily adduce significant examples of this.

Anyone who wanted to produce something original and not merely copy words and phrases from the lips of his predecessors had no choice but to leave all this motley confusion aside and look around from morn to night for some usable material. But in this too we were often sadly led astray. Much weight was given to a bon mot by Kleist,⁶⁸ and we were obliged to hear it repeatedly. Once, when he was being upbraided for taking so many solitary walks, he returned an amusing, witty, and truthful answer, declaring that this was not idleness, for he was out hunting images. This metaphor suited him as a nobleman and a soldier, since he set himself off thereby from other men of his class, who never passed up an opportunity to go out, rifle in hand, hunting rabbits and partridges. Thus in Kleist's poems, among such individual, well-chosen, but not always well-handled images, we find much that pleasantly reminds us of nature. But now we too were most earnestly admonished to go out "hunting images," although there could hardly have been a stranger preserve in which to look for poetic game than Apel's Garden, the Cake Gardens, the Valley of Roses, Gohlis, Raschwitz, and Konnewitz. Yet this was my motivation for many a solitary walk, even though very few beautiful or sublime objects met the observer, and in the Valley of the Roses, which was really beautiful in the best season of the year, the gnats kept one from forming any tender thoughts. But my indefatigable efforts made me very much aware of the small life of nature (I should like to use this word by analogy to still life), and since there is little deeper meaning in the pretty events one observes in this sphere, I trained myself to read into them a significance tending sometimes to the symbolical, sometimes to the allegorical, depending on whether contemplation, emotion, or reflection was preponderant. Let me relate one incident in lieu of many.

I shared the human trait of being infatuated with my own name and inscribed it everywhere, as young and culturally immature people are wont to do. Once I carved it very beautifully and exactly in the smooth bark of a thriving linden tree. The next autumn, when my affection for Annette was in full bloom, I took the trouble to carve hers above it. Then, toward the end of winter, I became a moody lover and seized on any excuse to torment and annoy her. In spring I chanced to visit the spot, and the sap, which was rising strongly in the trees, had oozed out through the still unencrusted incisions that spelled out her name and was moistening the hardened letters of mine with innocent botanical tears. I was dismayed to see her weeping over me in this way, her, whom my rudeness had often caused to shed tears. The tears came to my own eyes as I recalled my injustice and her love, and I hurried off

to apologize to her over and over for everything. Then I transformed this incident into an idyll, which I could never again read without feeling that affection, or recite to others without feeling moved.

While I, the shepherd on the Pleisse, was rather childishly immersing myself in such tender subject matter and selecting only what could be quickly referred back to my own heart, German poets had long since been supplied with material from a greater and more important quarter.

German poetry received its first true, noble, real-life content through Frederick the Great and the events of the Seven Years' War. A national literature cannot be or become anything but trivial unless it is based on something of supreme human concern, namely the deeds of the people and their shepherds, when both stand united for the same goal. Kings must be depicted in war and peril, where the very fact that they both determine and share the fate of the least of their subjects makes them of first concern; and they become much more interesting than the gods themselves, because the latter, when they have determined fate, withdraw from sharing it. In this sense, every nation, if it wants any prestige, must possess an epic, though not necessarily in the form of an epic poem.

The reason why the *War Songs* that Gleim intoned continue to rank so highly among German poems is that they originated with, and in the midst of, deeds, and besides, their well-chosen form, which would persuade one that a combatant had produced them in the thick of the fray, transmits the effect to us fully.

Ramler sings the deeds of his king⁶⁹ in a different, highly dignified way. All of his poems are full of meaning, draw our attention to great, heart-stirring matters, and for that very reason maintain their indestructible value.

The inner substance of the subject treated is the beginning and end of art. To be sure, no one will deny that a genius, a trained artistic talent, can make anything out of anything and master the most recalcitrant material, thanks to his technique. On closer inspection, however, what results is almost always seen to be a tour de force rather than a work of art, which should be based on a worthy subject. In the latter case, when the technique is used with skill, effort, and industry it will bring out the dignity of the material all the more successfully and brilliantly.

The Prussians, and Protestant Germany with them, thus gained a treasure for their literature that the opposing party lacked and could not make up for with any subsequent exertion. The Prussian authors properly had a grand concept of their king and they took this as their starting point. When he, in whose name they were doing everything, completely ignored them,⁷⁰ they were only inspired with greater zeal. A great deal of French culture had already come to Prussia before this,

first through the French colony and then on account of the king's partiality to this nation's intellectual achievements and financial institutions. The great benefit of this was that it challenged the Germans to contradiction and opposition. In the same fashion, Frederick's aversion to German was a fortunate thing for the development of a literary world. One did one's utmost to be noticed by the king, less in the hope of winning his regard than merely of not being *disregarded*. But this was done in the German way, that is, with inner conviction: one did what one considered to be the right thing, and wanted and wished the king to acknowledge this German sense of rightness. This did not happen and could not happen, for how could a king who wished to enjoy intellectual life be expected to wait for years, until much too late, to see something he considered barbaric develop and become enjoyable? Where products of the trades and factories were concerned he might well force himself (and more specifically his people!) to accept very mediocre substitutes for excellent foreign wares; but progress toward perfection is swifter in such things, and it does not take a man's whole life for them to ripen.

One work, however, the most genuine offspring of the Seven Years' War, with consummate North German national content, must receive the most honorable mention of all. As the first theatrical product based on important events in real life, with definitely contemporary content, it had an incalculable effect: *Minna von Barnhelm*.⁷¹ Lessing, unlike Klopstock and Gleim, did not mind discarding his personal dignity because he was confident of his ability to resume it again at any moment. He took pleasure in the distractions of a worldly tavern life, since the mighty workings of his inner self constantly required a powerful counterbalance; and thus he joined the retinue of General Tauentzien.⁷² It is easily seen that the play in question was begotten of war and peace, of hatred and affection. This was the work that succeeded in opening our view into a higher, more significant world and turning us away from that literary, bourgeois one in which poetry had previously moved.

The war's end did not alleviate the bitter tension between Prussia and Saxony. Only now did the Saxon feel how really painful were the wounds which had been dealt him by the suddenly so overbearing Prussian. Political peace could not immediately restore peace between individuals and their feelings. But to depict this being accomplished was the goal of the aforesaid drama. The charm and amiability of the Saxon girls overcome the resoluteness, propriety, and obstinacy of the Prussian men, and both the main and the secondary personages very artistically represent the happy union of disparate and resistant elements.

If I have confused my readers somewhat with these cursory and desultory remarks about German literature, then I have been successful

in giving them a notion of how chaotic the condition of my poor brain was in this conflict between two very significant epochs of our native literature. A great many new things intruded before I had learned to deal with the old ones, and a great many old things continued to exercise their hold over me even though I thought I was justified in renouncing them completely. Which path I chose in order to escape from this dilemma, but only gradually, I shall now do my best to describe.

I had most diligently, and in association with many worthy men, worked my way through the prolix period contemporaneous with my youth. The several quarto volumes of manuscript I had left behind with my father bore sufficient witness to that, and what a mass of attempts, outlines, and half-finished projects had gone up in smoke, more owing to my ill humor than to my convictions about them! From general conversation, from instruction, from many conflicts of opinion, but chiefly from my table companion, Aulic Councilor Pfeil, I was now learning more and more to appreciate significant material and the concise treatment of it, without understanding, however, where the former was to be sought or how the latter was to be attained. On account of my extremely restricted conditions, my companions' indifference, my teachers' reticence, the cultivated townspeople's aloofness, and the locality's quite undistinguished natural features I was forced to look within myself for everything. If I wanted true source material, feeling, or reflection for my poems, I had to delve into my own bosom. If, for the purpose of poetic representation, I required the direct experience of some object or event, I had no choice but to seek it within the only circle where I had any contacts or anything to stir my interest. In accordance with this I at first wrote certain small poems in song form or in a fairly loose meter. They are the products of reflection, treat of the past, and mostly have an epigrammatic twist.

And so began that tendency which throughout my life I have never overcome, namely to transform whatever gladdened or tormented me, or otherwise occupied my mind, into an image, a poem, and to come to terms with myself by doing this, so that I could both refine my conceptions of external things and calm myself inwardly in regard to them. It is likely that no one needed this talent more than I, since my nature kept propelling me from one extreme to the other. Therefore all my published works are but fragments of one great confession,⁷³ which this little book is a bold attempt to complete.

My former affection for "little Greta" had now been transferred to a "little Anne,"⁷⁴ about whom I can say no more than that she was young, pretty, lively, affectionate, and so agreeable that she certainly deserved to be established for a while as a little saint in the shrine of my heart, where I could make her the object of a reverence that is

often more pleasant to bestow than to receive. There was nothing to hinder me from seeing her daily. She helped prepare the food that I ate, she brought me, at least in the evening, the wine I drank, and the fact that our exclusive group of table companions met there every noontime was sufficient guarantee that this small inn, though visited by few guests except during the fair, deserved its good reputation. The will and opportunity to enjoy various amusements were there. But since she was neither able nor permitted to leave the inn very often, our means for entertainment grew rather meager. We sang Zachariä's songs and acted out Krüger's *Duke Michael*,¹⁸ with a knotted handkerchief making do as the nightingale, and so for a while things went along fairly well. But in the long run, the more innocent such relationships are, the less variety they provide. So that evil impulse came over me that misleads a man to amuse himself by tormenting his sweetheart and keeping her submissive with his arbitrary, tyrannical whims. My bad humor about the failure of my attempts at poetry, the apparent impossibility of understanding why they failed, and whatever else chafed me could be vented on her, I thought, since she really and truly loved me and did her best to please me. I spoiled the finest days for myself and her with absurd, groundless, petty jealousy. She bore it for a while with incredible patience, which I was cruel enough to try to the limit. But at last, to my humiliation and despair, I was forced to admit that her heart had become estranged from me, and that now I might have good reason for the frenzies I had indulged in beforehand without need or cause. There were some dreadful scenes between us, which profited me nothing, and only now did I feel that I really loved her and could not give her up. My passion increased and assumed all the forms it is capable of under such circumstances; indeed I finally assumed the girl's former role and did everything to please her. I even tried to get others to do nice things for her, because I could not abandon hope of winning her back. But it was too late! I really had lost her, and I took such frenzied revenge on myself for my mistake, trying to punish my moral nature by foolishly attacking my physical nature in various ways, that it contributed a great deal to those bodily ills which robbed me of some of the best years of my life. Indeed this loss might have totally ruined me if my poetic talent had not shown curative powers that were particularly helpful.

Even before, there had been intervals when I clearly perceived how reprehensible my conduct was. I would really pity the poor child when I saw how very needlessly I had wounded her. So often did I picture her situation and mine in great detail, and compare it with the happy state of another couple in our group, that I could not refrain from giving the material dramatic treatment, as a kind of penance, painful but ed-

ucational. From this arose the oldest of my extant dramatic works, the little play *The Moody Lover*,⁷⁶ which, for all its apparent innocuousness, betrays the stress of a seething passion.

But there was a dark, significant, intense world which had interested me even earlier. In connection with the Gretchen affair and its aftermath I had gotten a precocious look into the extraordinary labyrinth that underlies town society. Religion, mores, law, status, circumstances, custom—all these hold sway only on the surface of municipal life. The streets lined with those fine houses are kept clean, and everyone on them behaves quite decorously; but behind those walls affairs may be in great disorder, and many a smooth exterior is merely a thin layer of plaster over a rotting pile which can collapse overnight with a more than usually startling effect, since this occurs in the midst of a peaceful situation. I had already seen many families, some in the vicinity, others more remote, either ruined or pushed to the very brink of penury by bankruptcy, divorce, a daughter's seduction, murder, burglary, or poisoning, and, though I was young, in such cases I had frequently extended a helping, rescuing hand. Since my sincerity inspired confidence and my discretion was proven, since no sacrifice was too great for me and I liked best to act in the most critical cases, I was given plenty of opportunity to mediate, to hush matters up, to deflect a thunderbolt, and to accomplish whatever else was possible. Inevitably this brought me some painful and embarrassing experiences, through my own fault or that of others. To regain my composure, I sketched the outlines of several plays, and wrote the exposition for most of them. But since in each there was a tendency to alarming complications, and almost all these plays threatened to end tragically, I abandoned them one after the other. I finished only *The Accomplices*.⁷⁷ Against the gloomy family background, the cheerful, burlesque character of this play takes on overtones of uneasiness, so that in performance its general effect is disquieting, in spite of all the pleasant features. The plainly stated illegal actions are offensive to esthetic and moral feelings, and therefore the German theater rejected the play, although some imitations that pursued a safer path were accepted and applauded.

Yet, without my being conscious of it, both of the plays spoken of were written with something higher in view. They intimate that moral judgments should be made with cautious tolerance, and in somewhat rude and crude terms they give ready expression to that very Christian sentiment: "He who is without sin, let him cast the first stone."

On account of the gravity that darkened my first plays I mistakenly neglected some very promising motifs which were definitely congenial to my nature. That is to say, in the midst of those serious and, for a young person, dreadful experiences I was developing a reckless temperament that felt ready for anything, and not only did I scorn danger

but in fact wantonly courted it. Basically this was due to the high spirits of vigorous youth, which can be manifested in pranks that give great pleasure both at the moment and in retrospect. These things are so usual that in the jargon of our young academic friends they are called "suites," and the relationship is so close that one may as well say "play suites" as "play pranks."

Such humorous audacities are extremely effective when transferred to the stage with wit and sense. They differ from intrigue by their short duration and because their purpose, if any, must be an immediate one. Beaumarchais⁷⁸ thoroughly understood their value, and they are primarily responsible for the effectiveness of his Figaros. But such good-naturedly waggish and semi-roguish tricks may be played to serve a noble purpose, and personal danger may be involved; then the resulting situations, viewed from an esthetic and moral standpoint, are of the greatest value for the theater. And so, for example, the opera *The Waterbearer*⁷⁹ treats perhaps the most delightful subject matter we have ever seen on the stage.

In order to relieve the boredom of everyday life, I played countless such tricks, in part quite idly, in part to oblige my friends, whom I was eager to please. I do not remember even once having played one of these for a purpose of my own, and it never occurred to me to view such an undertaking as a subject for art; but if I had seized on such convenient materials and developed them, my first works would have been more cheerful and serviceable. A few things of this nature do appear later on in my writings, it is true, but sporadically and without plan.

Since we always feel closer to our hearts than to our minds, which can get along quite well by themselves while the former need our attention, the heart's concerns had always seemed more important to me. I never tired of reflecting upon the transiency of affections, the changeability of human nature, moral sensibility, and all the sublime and profound things which, when combined in our nature, may be considered the mystery of human life. In this matter also, I tried to get rid of my torment in a song, an epigram, or some other bit of verse, with too close reference to my own most personal feelings and particular situations to be of much interest to anyone but myself.

Meanwhile, after the passage of just a short time, my outer circumstances had changed a great deal. Madame Böhme, after a long, sad illness, had finally died. Toward the end she had no longer received me. Her husband was not particularly well satisfied with me; he thought I was too frivolous and not diligent enough. He took it especially amiss when it was reported to him that instead of taking proper notes in German public law I had sketched the personages discussed, such as the supreme court judge, the presidents, and the associate judges, in the

margins of my notebook, with odd periwigs, distracting my more attentive neighbors with these antics and making them laugh. After losing his wife he kept more to himself than ever, and at last, to spare myself his reproaches, I avoided him. However, it was a particular misfortune that Gellert did not want to use the power he could have wielded over us. Naturally he did not have time to be our father confessor and inquire after each one's needs and state of mind; therefore he adopted a general approach and tried to restrain us with the ecclesiastical institutions. That is why, when he did occasionally admit us, it was his custom to ask, with his small head bent down and in his pleasantly lachrymose voice, who our father confessor was and whether we partook of communion. When we failed to pass this examination we would be dismissed with lamentations, and we would feel more annoyed than edified. Still, we could not help cordially liking the man.

At this juncture I cannot resist bringing up something from my earlier youth to illustrate how the great churchly rituals must be treated as a connected series if they are to prove as beneficial as one expects them to be. The Protestant service is not rich or consequential enough to hold the congregation together, and so it can easily happen that members detach themselves, either to form smaller congregations or to conduct their daily affairs quite peacefully without church affiliations. Thus some time ago there was already complaint that churchgoers were becoming fewer year by year and, in direct proportion, the persons desiring to partake of the Lord's Supper. In both cases, but especially the latter, the reason is easily found; but who would dare put it into words? We shall try.

In moral and religious matters, just as in physical and secular ones, a person is reluctant to do anything on the spur of the moment; he requires a habit-forming series. If he has been told to perform some action reverently, he cannot imagine it as individual and disconnected; and if he is to repeat something willingly, it must not have grown unfamiliar to him. It can be said that the Protestant service in general lacks a rich content, but when this is closely investigated it will be found that Protestants have too few sacraments, and indeed only one in which they actively participate, the Lord's Supper, for they only see baptism performed on others and are not personally benefited by it. The sacraments are the most sublime part of religion, the physical symbol of extraordinary divine grace and favor. In the Eucharist our earthly lips are said to receive the incarnation of a divine essence, and under the form of an earthly food to partake of a heavenly one. It has this same meaning in all the Christian churches, whether the sacrament is taken with more or less acquiescence in the mystery, or with more or less accommodation to reason. It always remains a great and sacred action, which in reality represents things possible or impossible, things

a person can neither attain nor do without. But such a sacrament should not stand alone; no Christian can receive it with the true joy it is meant to give unless a sense of the symbolical and sacramental has been nourished in him. He must be accustomed to view the inner religion of the heart as completely one with that of the visible church, as the great universal sacrament, which is divided again into a multitude of others, but communicates to each of these parts its holiness, indestructibility, and eternity.

Here a youthful pair joins hands, but not merely in greeting or to dance; the priest speaks his blessing on their bond, and it is indissoluble. Before long, these spouses bring a little image of themselves to the foot of the altar, where it is purified with holy water and so firmly incorporated into the church that this benefit can be forfeited only through the most monstrous apostasy. The child learns about earthly things through its own experience in life, but for heavenly things it needs instruction. If the examination proves that this has been accomplished, then the child is accepted into the bosom of the church as a genuine citizen, as a true, voluntary believer, and this is not done without external symbols of the action's importance. Only now is he definitely a Christian, only now does he understand the advantages, and of course the duties too. But meantime many a strange thing has happened to him as a human being. Through precept and punishment he has come to see how dubious his inner condition is, and he will constantly be hearing more talk of precepts and transgressions; but punishment will no longer follow. Just when the conflict between natural and religious demands has, of necessity, involved him in endless confusion, he is given the admirable expedient of confiding his good and bad deeds, his frailties and doubts, to a worthy man who can calm, warn, and strengthen him, chastise him with punishments that are again symbolic, and lastly gladden him by completely absolving him of his guilt and returning the slate of his humanity to him washed clean. Thus, having been prepared and thoroughly calmed by several sacramental actions which, on closer inspection, seem to branch out into smaller sacramental motions, he kneels down to receive the host; and so that the mystery of this sublime act be enhanced even more, he sees the chalice only from a distance. This is not ordinary eating and drinking, which satisfies; it is heavenly food that makes one thirst for heavenly drink.

Let the youth not think, however, that this is all; let not even the man think so! It may be that in earthly matters we finally become self-reliant, although there too our knowledge, understanding, and character are not always adequate; but in heavenly things one is never too old to learn. The higher feelings in us, which often are not even really at ease there, are further hampered by so many outward concerns that

our own resources can hardly provide everything needed for our advice, consolation, and assistance. But throughout our whole life that specific remedy is always at hand, and there is always a pious, judicious man waiting to set erring persons back on the right path and to relieve those who are tormented.

And what has thus been tested throughout one's whole life will show its healing powers ten times more effectively at the gates of death. Out of familiar habit, begun in youth, the enfeebled sufferer accepts these symbolic, meaningful assurances with fervor, and at the moment when every earthly guarantee vanishes he receives a heavenly one to assure him of a blessed existence for all eternity. He feels a firm conviction that neither a hostile element nor a malevolent spirit will be able to hinder him from assuming a transfigured form in which to partake of immeasurable bliss in direct contact with the divinity from which it emanates.

Finally, to sanctify the whole person, his feet are also anointed and blessed. Even should he recover, they will now feel reluctant to touch this hard, impenetrable earthly soil. A miraculous buoyancy is invested in them, which enables them to leap away from the clod of earth that previously attracted them. And thus cradle and grave, however far apart they may chance to lie, are combined in an unbroken circle through a brilliant succession of equally worthy sacred actions, whose beauty we have only briefly indicated.

But unlike other fruit, these spiritual wonders do not sprout from natural soil, where they can neither be sown, nor planted, nor nurtured. They must be implored from another region, by means of prayer, and this cannot be done by just anyone, at just any time. This is where we approach the highest of these symbols from old, pious tradition. We hear that one man can be favored, blessed, and sanctified from above more than others. This must not appear to be a gift of nature, and therefore this great favor, and difficult duty, must be transferred from one authorized individual to the other. This, the greatest good that a man can attain, but can neither achieve nor seize possession of by himself, can be preserved and perpetuated on earth through spiritual inheritance. Indeed in the consecration of the priest everything is summed up that is necessary for the effective celebration of those sacred actions by which the throng receives favor without having to engage in any other activity except that of faith and unconditional trust. And thus, in a line with his predecessors and successors, in a group with his anointed colleagues, representing Him who blesses from on high, the priest makes all the more splendid an appearance since we do not revere him, but his office; do not bend the knee to his gesture, but to the blessing it bestows; and this blessing seems to come all the more sacredly and directly from heaven because the earthly instrument could

not weaken or actually invalidate it even though he were of a sinful, indeed wicked personal character.

How this truly spiritual complex is splintered up in Protestantism! There, some of the symbols mentioned are declared apochryphal and only a few accepted as canonical, and how can indifference toward the former prepare us for the high dignity of the latter?

In my time, I was sent for religious instruction to a good but weak old clergyman, who had been the family's confessor for many years. I could count off on my fingers both the catechism and a paraphrase of it, as well as the Christian dispensation, and I knew all the key Bible passages; but I could have spared myself the trouble. For when I heard that this good old man held his final examination according to an old formula I lost all interest in the matter, and during the last week I indulged in all sorts of distractions. Then I borrowed pages from an older friend who had gotten them away from the clergyman, put them in my hat, and read off without spirit or meaning all those things that I would surely have been able to utter with heartfelt conviction.

But I found that my good will and aspirations in this important matter were paralyzed even more by dry, dull routine when it came to approaching the confessional. I was conscious of many frailties but no great defects, and this consciousness actually served to minimize those frailties by showing me the way to my innate moral strength, and this (I felt), if I had determination and perseverance, would surely overcome the old Adam eventually. We were taught that we were much better than Catholics because we did not need to confess anything specific in the confessional, indeed that it would not be proper to do so even if we had wanted. The last part of this did not suit me at all, for I had the strangest religious doubts, which I would have gladly taken this opportunity to correct. Since this was not to be, I composed a confession for myself which expressed my condition well enough to reveal in general to an understanding man what I was forbidden to say in detail. But when I entered the old Franciscan choir and approached the curious, grated cabinets which the clerical gentlemen always occupied for this ritual: when the sexton opened the door for me and I found myself confined in this narrow space opposite my spiritual grandfather and he welcomed me in his weak, nasal voice: suddenly all the light in my mind and heart was extinguished. The well-memorized speech would not cross my lips, and in embarrassment I opened the book I held in my hands and read from it the first formula I came upon, which was so general that anyone could have spoken it quite calmly. I received the absolution and departed neither warm nor cold. The next day I went to the Lord's table with my parents, and for a few days conducted myself as seemed proper after such a holy action.

Afterwards, however, I showed symptoms of a malady which comes

because our religion is complicated by various dogmas and is based on biblical passages that admit of several interpretations; it attacks thoughtful people so severely that hypochondriacal conditions result and these are carried to such extremes that they produce fixed ideas. I have known several people who, although otherwise quite sensible in their mode of life and thought, could not rid themselves of the idea of the sin against the Holy Ghost and the fear of having committed it. A like evil threatened me in respect to the Eucharist. Even when I was very young, the saying that anyone who takes the sacrament unworthily eats and drinks damnation unto himself had made a tremendous impression on me. All the dreadful things I had read in medieval histories about ordeals, about the strangest trials by glowing iron, flaming fire, and rising water, even what the Bible tells us about the spring whose water benefits the innocent person but makes the guilty one swell up and burst—all that presented itself to my imagination and merged into the most terrible thing, since false promises, hypocrisy, perjury, blasphemy, and all that seemed to weigh on the unworthy participant in this most sacred action. And it was that much worse because no one could declare himself worthy, and the forgiveness of sins, which was supposed to even everything out in the end, was found to be so very conditional, after all, that one could not be sure of freely claiming it.

This gloomy scruple tormented me so much, and the explanations represented to me as adequate seemed so bleak and feeble, that the terrible image only acquired an increasingly fearful aspect; and as soon as I reached Leipzig I tried to disentangle myself altogether from churchly ties. Consequently, how oppressive Gellert's admonitions became for me! Since he was always compelled to treat things very laconically in order to discourage our importunity, I did not want to burden him with such odd questions, and I was even ashamed of them myself when I felt cheerful. At last I completely abandoned these qualms of conscience along with the church and the sacrament.

Gellert, in accord with his pious character, had drafted an ethics and lectured from it publicly from time to time, thereby fulfilling his duty toward the student body in an honorable manner. For a very long time Gellert's writings had been the foundation of German moral culture, and everyone dearly longed to see this particular work in print; but since this was supposed to happen only after the good man's death, we considered ourselves very fortunate to hear him expound it himself while he was still alive. At such hours the philosophical auditorium was packed tight, and this noble individual's beautiful soul, his pure intentions, his interest in our welfare, and the exhortations, warnings, and pleas he delivered in a rather sad, hollow tone certainly made an impression at the moment; but it did not last long. Besides, there were scoffers who succeeded in making us suspicious about this gentle and,

to them, enervating manner. I remember that a Frenchman who was traveling through inquired about the maxims and sentiments of this man who drew such an enormous crowd. When we had given him the necessary report, he shook his head and said with a smile, "*Laissez le faire, il nous forme des dupes.*"

And good society as well, which finds it hard to tolerate anything estimable in its vicinity, was occasionally able to stunt the moral influence Gellert might have had on us. First he was criticized for giving better instruction to the rich, aristocratic Danes who were his special protégés than to the other students, and for being so markedly solicitous of them. Then it was imputed to him as self-interest and nepotism when he had a midday table established for these young men at his brother's house. The latter, a big, imposing, blunt, gruff-spoken, somewhat coarse man, was said to have been a fencing master; and it was said that his brother made too many allowances for him, because sometimes he treated his noble table companions harshly and roughly. Therefore it was thought necessary to take the young men's part again, and so our excellent Gellert's name was dragged back and forth to such a degree that we, to avoid confusion, finally grew indifferent toward him and did not go to visit him any more. Yet we always greeted him very politely when he came riding along on his gentle white horse. This horse had been a present to him from the elector, who wanted to make him feel obliged to take the exercise so necessary for his health—a distinction that was not easily forgiven him.

And so the moment gradually approached when I was to disregard all authority and to doubt, nay, despair of, even the greatest and best individuals I had known or pictured in my mind.

Frederick II, in my estimation, still outranked all the prominent men of the century, and therefore I found it very perplexing when my praise of him turned out to be just as unacceptable to the inhabitants of Leipzig as it had been in my grandfather's house. Granted, they had felt the hand of war heavily, and so could not be blamed for having less than the best opinion of the man who had started and prolonged it. They agreed that he was certainly a remarkable man, but by no means a great one. They said it did not take much skill to accomplish something if one had great resources, and if one spared neither lands, nor money, nor blood, then one's project could eventually be carried out. Frederick (they said) had not demonstrated greatness in any of his plans or in anything that he had actually undertaken. As long as he had the initiative, he had made nothing but mistakes, and the extraordinary things had not happened until he had found it necessary to correct these mistakes; and that was the only reason he had won his great reputation. Who would not like to have the privilege of nicely setting to rights again the many mistakes one makes? If one just reviewed the Seven

Years' War step by step one would find that the king had sacrificed his excellent army quite needlessly and had himself been to blame that this ruinous feud had been dragged out so long. A truly great man and general would have finished off his enemies much more swiftly. In proclaiming these sentiments they had endless details to cite that I could not gainsay, and gradually I felt that the implicit respect I had paid this remarkable sovereign from childhood on was cooling off.

While the inhabitants of Leipzig were robbing me of the pleasure I took in venerating a great man, a new friend I acquired at that time was significantly reducing the regard I felt for them, my current fellow citizens. This friend was one of the queerest birds on earth. His name was Behrisch,⁸⁰ and he was the tutor of young Count Lindenau. His very appearance was strange enough. Lean and well-built, far into his thirties, he had a very large nose and strongly marked features in general. From morning to night he wore a hairpiece that was not far from being a regular wig; he dressed very neatly and never went out except with his sword at his side and his hat under his arm. He was one of those people who have a special talent for wasting time, or rather, who can pass time by making much ado about nothing. Everything he did had to be done with deliberation and a certain decorum that could have been called affected, if Behrisch had not already possessed a certain innate affectation of manner. He resembled an old Frenchman, and indeed he spoke and wrote French very well and easily. His greatest delight was in seriously occupying himself with ridiculous things and in pursuing any absurd idea to extremes. Thus he constantly wore gray, though the different parts of his attire were of different materials, producing different shades; and he could meditate for days about adding one more kind of gray to his person. He was happy when he succeeded and he could shame us for having been in doubt or having declared it impossible. Then he would read us long lectures about our lack of inventiveness and our disbelief in his talents.

In addition, he was well educated, being especially proficient in modern languages and literatures; and he wrote an excellent hand. He was very well disposed toward me, and since I was always accustomed and inclined to associate with older persons I soon attached myself to him. My society was particularly entertaining for him because he liked to curb my restlessness and impatience, and I for my part kept him quite busy doing this. In literature he possessed that thing called "taste," a certain general opinion about good and bad, mediocre and admissible; but mostly his judgments were negative, so that with his unkind, but witty and amusing comments about various individuals' writings and poems he destroyed the little faith I still had left in contemporary authors. He accepted my own things indulgently and left me in peace, but on the condition that I should have nothing printed.

On the other hand, he promised me he would himself copy the things he thought good and present them to me in a beautiful volume.⁸¹ This undertaking was now made the excuse for the greatest possible waste of time. Before he could find the right paper, settle on the format, determine the width of the margin and the appropriate kind of script, procure and cut the raven feathers, and prepare the India ink, whole weeks passed without anything whatever being copied. Every time he got down to the writing it was with the same amount of ceremony, but by and by he actually did put together a charming manuscript. The titles of the poems were in Gothic script, the verses themselves in Saxon block script. At the end of each poem was a suitable vignette, which he had either copied from somewhere or invented by himself, and in executing these he was able to imitate very prettily the hatchings of the woodcuts and tailpieces used for this purpose. Another excuse for dissipating precious hours was to show me these things as they progressed and, with comic pathos, to praise my good fortune in being immortalized in such an excellent manuscript, indeed in a style no printing press could match. Yet association with him was always subtly educational on account of the fine knowledge he possessed, and in a moral sense it was also very salutary for me because he knew how to tone down my restless, passionate nature. He also had a very special aversion to anything coarse, and although his jokes were thoroughly strange, they never descended to the vulgar or trivial. He permitted himself a grotesque antipathy toward his countrymen and made everything they undertook seem funny. In particular, he never grew tired of making comical descriptions of individual people, for he found something to object to in everyone's outward appearance. Thus, when we were lounging together at the window, he could spend hours in criticizing the passersby and, when he had finished finding things wrong with them, he would point out exactly and in detail how they really should have dressed and how they would have to walk and behave in order to look like proper persons. These suggestions usually involved something absurdly inappropriate, so that we not only laughed at the way the individual looked, but also at the way he would have looked in the event he were mad enough to disfigure himself thus. He went about these things quite mercilessly, but without the slightest malice. However, we for our part knew how to torment him by averring that from his outward appearance one would be obliged to take him, if not for a French dancing master, at any rate for the university language teacher. This reprimand would then usually set him off for hours on a disquisition in which he demonstrated the vast difference between himself and an old Frenchman. Coincidentally he would reproach us for not having made all sorts of ill-advised suggestions for the alteration and modification of his wardrobe.

The more beautifully and carefully the work of copying proceeded, the more enthusiastically I went on writing my poetry, which from this point on inclined wholly in the direction of what was natural and true. And if I could not always find significant subjects, at least I always tried to depict them purely and distinctly, being spurred on by my friend's reminders about what a lot of trouble it was to inscribe a verse on Dutch paper with a raven feather and India ink, and how much time, talent, and effort it took, and that this was not to be wasted on anything empty and superfluous. Then he would usually open up a completed fascicle and give a detailed analysis of what would be inadmissible at this or that spot, adding how fortunate we were that it was not actually there. Next he would speak very scornfully of book printing, pretend to be the typesetter, make fun of the latter's gestures, reaching quickly back and forth, and attribute all of literature's misfortunes to this maneuver. In contrast, he would extol the decorum and noble posture of a scribe and immediately sit down to demonstrate this, whereupon he of course would scold us for not comporting ourselves at our desks in accordance with his example and model. Then he would come back to the contrast with the typesetter, turn an unfinished letter upside down, and demonstrate the impropriety of writing from below to above or from right to left, and so many more things of the kind that one could fill volumes with them.

It was with such harmless nonsense that we frittered away our precious time, and it did not occur to anyone that something might by chance emerge from our circle that would cause a general sensation and slightly tarnish our reputation.

Gellert apparently did not enjoy his composition course very much, and when he nevertheless felt an urge to give some guidance in poetic and prose style, this was done very privately for just a few students, among whom we were not included. Professor Clodius⁸² proposed to fill the resultant gap in public instruction; he had won himself some repute in matters literary, critical, and poetic and, being a young, vigorous, obliging man, he made many friends both at the university and in the town. Gellert himself directed us into the class this man had taken over, and in the main we noticed little difference. He too criticized only details, he too corrected with red ink, and we saw ourselves surrounded exclusively by errors, without any hope of finding out what was right. I had brought him several little works of mine, which he did not treat badly. But just then I received word from home that I would have to write a poem for the wedding of my uncle. I felt so far removed from that light and light-minded period when something of the kind would have made me happy, and the situation itself was so uninspiring to me, that I decided I would embellish my work as well as possible with external ornament. Therefore I assembled all of Olympus to consult

about the marriage of a Frankfurt lawyer, and, to be sure, very seriously, as was certainly appropriate for the nuptials of such a gentleman. Venus and Themis had fallen out over him, but a roguish trick played on the latter goddess by Cupid won the suit for the former, and the gods decided in favor of the marriage.

I was not at all dissatisfied with my work. I received a nice congratulatory letter from home about it, took pains to prepare another good copy, and hoped to wring some praise from my teacher too. But here I had badly miscalculated. He took the thing seriously, and, paying no regard whatever to the clearly parodistic aspect of the idea, he declared it to be extremely reprehensible to make such great use of divine means for such petty human ends. He censured the use and misuse of these mythological figures as a false custom originating in pedantic times, found my expressions either too lofty or too lowly, and surely did not spare any red ink on the details, while asserting that he had still done too little.

Pieces like this were of course read aloud and criticized anonymously, but we would spy each other out, and it did not remain a secret that this ill-fated assembly of the gods was my work. However, once I had adopted his viewpoint, his criticism seemed quite correct to me, and on closer inspection those gods were really nothing more than hollow shams; so I cursed Olympus altogether, renounced the whole mythical Pantheon, and from that time on Amor and Luna have been the only deities ever to appear in my small poems.

This same Clodius headed the list of persons Behrisch had selected as the targets for his wit, and it surely was not difficult to find a comic side to him. Being short and rather stout and heavy-set of figure, he was vehement in his movements; he was also somewhat careless in his statements and volatile in his behavior. All of this distinguished him from his colleagues, who, however, mindful of his good qualities and fine potentialities, were quite content to overlook the rest.

He was usually delegated to write the poems required for solemn occasions. In the so-called "ode" he adopted the manner used by Ramler, who, however, was the only one that it suited. Clodius, as an imitator, had especially noted the foreign words that lend such majestic pomp to those Ramler poems and make a very good effect on one's ear, feelings, and imagination because they are in keeping with the sublimity of the subject and the rest of the poetic treatment. In Clodius, however, these expressions seemed alien, because his poetry in general was not of a kind to lift the spirit in any way.

Now we were often confronted with such poems, beautifully printed and extravagantly praised, and we found it most objectionable that this man, who had spoiled the Olympian gods for us, himself wanted to fashion a different ladder up to Parnassus from rungs made of Greek

and Latin words. These often repeated expressions fixed themselves indelibly in our memory, and on one merry occasion, when we were consuming the most delicious cake in the Cabbage Gardens, it suddenly occurred to me to assemble those mighty words in a poem addressed to Hendel, the pastrycook. No sooner said than done! And so let it be written again here, as it once was written in pencil on the restaurant wall:

O Hendel, whose *renown* from south to north extends,
 Attend this *Paean* which up to your ears ascends!
 You bake your cakes with *genius* most creative,
Originals ne'er seen by Gaul, or British native.
 The coffee-ocean pouring out before you shows
 What's sweeter than the juice that from *Hymettus* flows.
 Your house, a *monument* you've earned with your *creations*,
 And hung about with *trophies*, proclaims to all the *nations*:
 Without a *diadem* saw Hendel here his luck
 And from the *cothurn* did some pretty pennies pluck.
 When once beneath an *urn's* majestic *pomp* you're sleeping
 Your *catacomb* will then resound with patriots' weeping.
 But live! your *Torus* be a nest for noble brood!
 Stand high as Mount *Olymp*, firm as *Parnassus* stood!
 No Grecian *phalanx* that is armed with Rome's *ballistas*
 Shall devastate *Germania's*, or Hendel's, *vistas*.
 Your weal is all our pride, your sorrow all our smart,
 And Hendel's *temple* is the Leipzig student's heart.

This poem remained for a long time, without being noticed, among the many others which defaced the walls of these rooms; and we, having had our fun, forgot it completely in favor of other things. Some considerable time afterwards, Clodius came out with his *Medon*,⁸³ and we found its hero's wisdom, magnanimity, and virtue to be infinitely ridiculous, however much the first performance of the play was applauded. The same evening, as we foregathered in our tavern, I wrote a prologue for it in doggerel which had Harlequin come on stage holding two big sacks. He puts them down on either side of the proscenium and, after a few preliminary jests, he confides to the spectators that the sacks contain moral-esthetic sand, which the actors are frequently going to throw in their eyes. One is filled with good deeds that cost nothing and the other with beautifully phrased sentiments that mean nothing. He is loath to depart and comes back a few times, admonishes the spectators with all earnestness to heed his warning, reminds them that he has always been their friend and has their best interests at heart, and so forth. This prologue was immediately acted out in the room by our friend Horn, but the joke remained strictly between us; not even

a copy was made of it, and the paper soon got lost. However, Horn, who had played the Harlequin quite well, took it into his head to lengthen my poem to Hendel by several lines and made it refer to *Medon* instead. He read this aloud to us, and we did not care for it because we did not find the additions very witty, and the poem itself, which had been written in a totally different sense, seemed to be disfigured. Our friend was unhappy about our indifference, nay, our censure, and so he apparently showed it to other people, and they thought it novel and amusing. Now copies were made of it and, thanks to the reputation of Clodius' *Medon*, these immediately circulated among the public. The result was universal disapproval, and the originators (for people soon found out that it proceeded from our clique) were roundly denounced, since nothing of the kind had happened since Cronegk's and Rost's attacks on Gottsched.⁸⁴ We had quite secluded ourselves before all this, but now our situation was as isolated as that of owls from other birds. Evidently the affair met with no approval in Dresden either, and this had serious, if not actually disagreeable, results for us. Count Lindenau had for some time not been altogether satisfied with his son's tutor. For although the young man was by no means being neglected and Behrisch always stayed in the young count's room or near it when the teachers gave their daily lessons, very properly attended the lectures with him, did not go out without him by day, and also accompanied him on all his walks, still, since the rest of us were always to be found at Apel's place, we would join in on these strolls; and that in itself raised some eyebrows. Behrisch became quite addicted to us as well, and about nine o'clock on most evenings he would put the valet in charge of his pupil and seek us out in the tavern, never coming, however, except in shoes and stockings, his sword at his side, and usually with his hat under his arm. There would be almost no end to the jokes and nonsense he began with all of us. For example, one of our friends was in the habit of leaving us promptly at ten because he was interested in a pretty girl who was only free to converse with him around this time. We missed his company, and one evening, when we were having a particularly good time together, Behrisch quietly resolved not to let him get away for once. At the stroke of ten, the young man rose and wished us good night. Behrisch called out and asked him to wait a moment, for he wanted to go with him. Thereupon, as charmingly as could be, he began to look for his sword, though it was right in front of his eyes, and made such clumsy attempts to buckle it on that he never did finish doing it. At first he did this so naturally that no one suspected anything. When, however, he proceeded to vary the theme and the sword found its way now to his right side, now between his legs, general laughter broke out. Having a good sense of humor himself, the fellow who wanted to hurry away joined in with this and let Behrisch

carry on until the time for the rendezvous was past. Then our common merriment and pleasant conversation really got started and lasted until far into the night.

Unfortunately Behrisch, and we through him, had a somewhat different inclination to some girls who had a worse reputation than they deserved, and of course this did nothing to enhance our reputation either. We had been seen in their garden a few times, and it is true that we walked in that direction when the young count was along. All of this may well have been compiled and finally reported to the father; at any rate, he began looking for some gentle way of getting rid of the tutor, and this in the end brought Behrisch good luck. His good appearance, his knowledge and talents, and his honesty, which was unimpeachable, had won him the affection and respect of prominent persons, on whose recommendation he was appointed tutor to the hereditary prince of Dessau and came to enjoy steady good fortune at the court of a sovereign who was excellent in every regard.

The loss of a friend like Behrisch was a matter of the greatest consequence to me. Though he had improved my mind, he had also spoiled me, and his presence was necessary if the community was to benefit at all from the time he had seen fit to spend on me. He knew how to make me do all the polite and proper things that were particularly called for here, and display my social talents. However, since I had not gotten to the point of being independent in such matters, once I was alone again I slid back into my confused, stubborn ways, which only grew worse as I became progressively unhappier with an environment that I supposed was not happy with me. In this most arbitrary mood I took offense at things I should have realized were meant for my own good, thereby alienating many a person with whom I previously had been on friendly terms; and as a result of the many contretemps into which I brought myself and others, whether by commission or omission, whether by doing too much or too little, I had to hear it said by my well-wishers that I lacked experience. The same thing would no doubt have been said to me by any well-meaning person who saw my productions, especially those that had to do with the external world. I observed the latter as well as I could, but found little in it that was salutary, and had to add improvements from my own imagination just to make it barely tolerable. I had occasionally importuned my friend Behrisch to make clear to me what experience might be. Full of nonsense as he was, he put me off from one day to the next and finally, after many preliminaries, disclosed the following: true experience, in the last analysis, is when one experiences how an experienced person, while experiencing, must experience experience. When we scolded him severely for this and called him to account, he asserted that a great secret lay behind these words, which we would only grasp when we

had experienced (and so on, for it was no trouble for him to go on speaking like that for a quarter hour), since then experiencing would become ever more experienced and eventually a true experience. When we were near to being driven to desperation by these jokes, he protested that he had learned this manner of making himself clear and effective from our newest and greatest authors, who brought it to our attention how one could rest a restful rest and how the quiet could become even quieter in the quiet.

It happened that good society was lionizing an officer who was on leave among us. He had fought in the Seven Years' War, and had won everyone's confidence as a remarkably sensible, experienced man. I did not find it difficult to approach him, and we often took walks together. The concept of experience had almost become a monomania with me and I had a passionate need for it to be clarified. With characteristic candor I revealed to him the agitated state in which I found myself. He smiled, and in response to my questions was so kind as to tell me something about his life and generally about the world around us, from which, it is true, nothing better emerged than this: namely, experience convinces us that our best ideas, wishes, and resolves are unattainable, and that anyone who nurtures such fancies and is eager to express them will certainly be taken for an inexperienced person.

Being an honest, straightforward man, he assured me that he himself had not yet quite given up these fancies and was tolerably well satisfied with the bit of faith, love, and hope he had left. After this I made him tell me much about the war, about life in the field, and about skirmishes and battles, especially those in which he had taken part. These enormous events took on quite a strange aspect when seen from the perspective of a single individual. Next I persuaded him to give me a frank description of the conditions that had prevailed at court shortly beforehand, which apparently were quite incredible. Then I heard about the physical strength of August II, his many children and great extravagance, next about his successor's love of art and collecting, about Count Brühl⁸⁵ and his boundless love of pomp, the details of which seemed almost absurd, and about the multitude of festivals and splendid entertainments, all of which were cut off abruptly by Frederick's invasion of Saxony. Now the royal palaces lay in ruins, all of Brühl's magnificence was destroyed, and nothing was left but a once splendid land now severely damaged.

When he saw that I was amazed by their foolish enjoyment of good fortune and then grieved by the resulting misfortune, he pointed out to me that it was unconditionally demanded of an experienced man neither to be amazed nor all too sympathetic in regard to these matters. Thereupon I felt very much like persevering for a while longer in my previous inexperience, and he encouraged me in this, charging me quite

earnestly to restrict myself to pleasant experiences for the present, and to hold off the unpleasant ones as much as possible when they thrust themselves upon me. Once, however, when the general topic was again experience, and I recited for him those ridiculous phrases of my friend Behrisch, he shook his head, smiling, and said, "There you see what happens to words when once they are spoken! These sound so playful, indeed so silly, that it might seem impossible to assign any rational sense to them; and yet, perhaps, we might make an attempt at it."

And when I urged him, he replied in his cheerful, reasonable way, "If you will permit me to add a commentary and supplement to your friend's words, continuing in his fashion, then I believe he meant to say that experience is nothing more than experiencing what one does not wish to experience, which is what it generally comes to, at least in this world."

Book Eight

Although there was a world of difference between them in practically every respect, there was one other man who could in a certain sense be compared with Behrisch: I mean Oeser,* who was another of those people who dream their lives away in a comfortable occupation. Even his friends privately admitted that, while he had a very fine natural talent, he had not used it actively enough in his younger years, and this was the reason that he had never achieved perfect technique in art. Yet a certain industriousness seemed to have been kept in reserve for his maturity, and during the many years I knew him he never seemed to lack for ideas or be wanting in diligence. He had strongly attracted me from the very beginning: his abode itself, eerie and extraordinary, held a great charm for me. In the old Pleissenburg castle, in the corner at the right, one went up a bright, renovated spiral staircase, and on the left one found the bright, spacious rooms of the drawing academy, of which he was the director. But one reached the man himself only by way of a narrow, dark passage running between his suite of rooms and an attic where grain was stored. The entrance was to be sought at the end of this. The first room was adorned with pictures of the later Italian school, by masters he often praised highly for their delicacy. Since I and some noblemen were taking private lessons from him, we were permitted to draw here, and sometimes we even got into his adjacent inner chamber, which contained not only the few books he owned and his collections of objets d'art and natural specimens, but also whatever else seemed particularly to interest him. Everything was arranged simply and tastefully and in a way that permitted the small space to accommodate a great many things. The furniture, cupboards, and portfolios were elegant without being pretentious and overdone. Indeed, the first thing he recommended to us, and then kept coming back to, was simplicity in all objects that are joint products of the arts and the crafts. As a sworn enemy of the shell and scroll style, as of all grotesqueries of taste, he showed us old drawings and copper engravings with examples of that type in contrast with better decorations and simpler forms of furniture and other interior appointments; and because his whole surroundings corroborated these maxims, his words and teachings made a good and lasting impression on us. In addition, we had the opportunity of seeing his ideas put into practice, because he was well respected by persons in private life and government, and was asked for advice in connection with new buildings and alterations of old ones. He seemed generally more inclined to make things for oc-

casions, for a specific goal and use, than to undertake and execute things existing for themselves alone, which require a more complete treatment. Therefore he was always ready and available when the booksellers wanted engravings, either of small or large size, for some work or other; for instance, he had etched the vignettes for Winckelmann's first writings.⁸⁷ Often, however, he only made very unfinished drawings, to which Geyser⁸⁸ managed to accommodate himself quite well. His figures all had a rather abstract, not to say idealized, quality. The women were pleasant and appealing, the children acceptably naive; it was only with the men that things did not go well. While his manner, to be sure, was clever, it was also both nebulous and sketchy, and so for the most part the men got the look of Neapolitan beggars. But since he calculated the effect of his compositions less on form than on light, shadow, and masses, they looked very good on the whole; and indeed everything he touched and produced was distinguished by a peculiar grace. Likewise, because of a deepseated fondness for what was significant, allegorical, and thought-provoking, which he neither could nor tried to suppress, his works always provided food for meditation, and ideas compensated for what artistic execution left incomplete in them. This tendency, which is always dangerous, sometimes led him to the limit of what good taste allows, if not beyond it. He often sought to achieve his goals by means of the strangest conceits and whimsical jokes; indeed his best works all have a tinge of humor. If the public was not always pleased with these things, he would take revenge with another, still odder bit of nonsense. Thus he later depicted, in the ante-room of the big concert hall, one of his ideal female figures in the act of moving a pair of snuffers toward a candle, and he was highly pleased whenever he could get someone to argue the question: did this strange Muse intend to trim the light or extinguish it? Then he would archly bring up some teasing afterthoughts.

But it was the construction of the new theater that caused the greatest sensation at my time, and his curtain for it, while it was still quite new, certainly made an extraordinarily lovely effect. Oeser had taken the Muses away from the clouds where they generally hover on such occasions and set them onto the earth. A forecourt of the temple of Fame was adorned with the statues of Sophocles and Aristophanes, around which all the modern dramatists were gathered. The goddesses of the arts were present here too, and everything was dignified and beautiful. Now comes the odd part, however! Through the open middle ground the portal of the distant temple was visible, and a man in a light jacket was walking straight toward it between the aforementioned groups, without paying them any heed; therefore one saw him from the back, and he was not individually delineated. This man was meant to signify Shakespeare, who, without predecessors or successors, without paying

attention to models, was advancing toward immortality independently. This work was brought to completion in the great attic over the new theater. We often gathered around Oeser there, and that is where I read aloud to him from the specimen sheets of *Musarion*.⁸⁹

As far as I was concerned, I was making no headway in the practice of art. Oeser's teaching had an effect on our minds and our taste, but his own technique in drawing was too uneven to be my guide toward strict and decisive methods, since in any case I had only a dim understanding of the objects of art and of nature. In regard to faces and bodies he concentrated more on the general appearance than on the forms, more on the gestures than on the proportions. He gave us concepts of the figures and then demanded that we let them come to life within us. That would all have been well and good if he had not had mere beginners in front of him. Therefore it could certainly be denied that he had an outstanding talent for instruction. On the other hand, however, we had to admit that he was very intelligent and worldly-wise, and that his fortunate sharpness of mind qualified him very well indeed, in a higher sense, to be a teacher. He clearly recognized the shortcomings that afflicted each one of us, but he eschewed direct censure of them and instead hinted very laconically at his approval or disapproval. This would require one to think the matter over, and so one quickly gained a good deal of insight. For example, I had taken blue paper and very carefully drawn a bouquet of flowers in black and white chalk, according to the instructions that we had, and I had tried to set off the little image, partly by wiping, partly with hatchmarks. After I had been working on it like this for a long time, he finally came up behind me and said, "More paper!"—whereupon he immediately went away. My neighbor and I racked our brains to find his meaning, for, being on a large half sheet, my bouquet had plenty of space around it. After much reflection, at last we thought we had figured out what he meant when we observed that through mixing black and white together I had completely concealed the blue ground, destroyed the half tints, and had really been very busy producing an unpleasant drawing. Moreover, although he did not fail to instruct us quite adequately about perspective and light and shadow, he did it in such a way that we had to strain and torture ourselves in order to find how to apply the principles we were taught. His intention, since, after all, we were not supposed to become artists, was probably only to develop our insight and taste and to acquaint us with the requisites of an art work, not to demand that we produce one. Industry was not my strong point in any case, and I only took pleasure in what came easily to me. Therefore I gradually became, if not idle, at any rate discouraged, and, because knowledge is easier than its application, I was glad to let him lead us in his fashion wherever he wished.

At that time d'Argenville's *Lives of the Painters* was translated into German.⁹⁰ I got it fresh from the printer and studied it quite diligently. This seemed to please Oeser, who then arranged for us to see many a portfolio from the great Leipzig collections and thereby introduced us to the history of art. But these studies too had a different effect on me than he probably intended. The many subjects which I saw treated by the artists awoke my poetic talent, and just as one makes a copperplate engraving for a poem, so I now made poems for these engravings and drawings. I could visualize the personages depicted in them as they had been before and would be afterwards, could compose a little song to suit them, and so trained myself to view the arts in combination with each other. Indeed even my blunders, the fact that my poems sometimes grew too descriptive, were subsequently useful to me, when I became more reflective, for they made me aware of the difference between the arts. There were several of these little items in the collection prepared by Behrisch, but nothing remains of that.

Oeser lived in an element of art and taste that also became natural for us, provided we attended his lessons regularly, and it grew ever more profitable and enjoyable through his habit of sharing with us his recollections of deceased or absent men with whom he had once had a connection, or still maintained one. Once a person had his esteem, there was never any change in his attitude, and his affection remained constant.

After we had heard him praise Caylus⁹¹ highly among the Frenchmen, he also acquainted us with the Germans active in this field. We learned that Professor Christ⁹² had served art well in the capacity of admirer, collector, connoisseur, and collaborator and had used his learning to its genuine advancement. Heinecken,⁹³ on the other hand, could not be mentioned, in part because of his excessive preoccupation with the all too childish beginnings of German art, for which Oeser had little use, and in part because he had once dealt harshly with Winckelmann, something which could never be forgiven him. However, our attention was drawn very forcibly to Lippert's⁹⁴ efforts, since our teacher knew how to shed sufficient light on their merits. He said that while statues and the larger pieces of sculpture remained the be-all and end-all of artistic knowledge, they were seldom to be seen either as originals or plaster casts. However, thanks to Lippert a little world of gems was revealed, and in this one could perceive, in a more striking and understandable way, the ancients' humbler virtues, their clever conceits, appropriate groupings, and tasteful treatment; their great numbers also made comparisons more possible. While we were occupying ourselves with these as much as was allowed, our minds turned to Winckelmann's noble life of art in Italy, and we took his first writings in hand reverently, for Oeser was passionately devoted to him and easily imbued us with

the same feeling. To be sure, we were unable to decipher the problematical parts of those short essays, which become even more confusing through their irony and allusions to quite special opinions and events. But because Oeser had exerted so much influence on them and also incessantly preached to us the gospel of beauty and, even more, of taste and agreeableness, we did recover the general sense. We also believed that our interpretations were proceeding the more smoothly since we were dipping, to our great good fortune (as we thought), from the same spring where Winckelmann had originally slaked his thirst.

A town can meet with no better luck than that of having several cultivated men, with the same concepts of what is good and right, living there near each other. Leipzig had this advantage and could enjoy it in peace, since various divergencies of opinion had not yet emerged. Huber,⁹⁵ besides being a collector of copperplate engravings and an experienced connoisseur, performed the gratefully acknowledged service of trying to acquaint even the French with the value of German literature. Kreuchauff,⁹⁶ an art lover with a practiced eye, was friends with every member of the Art Society, and thus could view all their collections as his own. Winkler⁹⁷ was most happy to share with others his expert's delight in his treasures. With many another who joined them, they all lived and worked just to one purpose, and, although I was often allowed to attend when they were examining works of art, I cannot recall that discord ever arose. They always duly considered the school from which the artist proceeded, the time in which he lived, the special talent that nature had bestowed on him, and the extent to which he made practical use of it. They showed no preference either for sacred or secular subjects, for those of country or town, or for living or lifeless ones. The question was always about artistic quality.

Even though these art lovers and collectors were more oriented to the Dutch school by virtue of their location, disposition, means, and opportunities, they always, while schooling their eyes to the infinite merits of these northwestern artists, kept sending respectful, longing side-glances toward the southeast.

And thus the university, where I failed to pursue the goals of my family, and indeed my own, still provided me with the fundamentals of a study that was to bring me my greatest satisfaction in life, and I have always cherished my memories of the localities in which my interest was so significantly kindled. The old Pleissenburg, the rooms of the academy, but above all, Oeser's apartments, and then too the Winkler and Richter collections⁹⁸—I can still visualize all of these vividly.

A young man finds himself in a very difficult position, however, when he is being only casually instructed as older men converse among themselves about things they already understand, and it is left up to

him to put it all in order. Therefore I and the others looked around hopefully for further enlightenment, which would then come to us from a man whom we already owed a great deal.

There are two ways to delight the mind greatly: through contemplation and concept. But the first demands a worthy object, which may not always be at hand, and proportionate cultural development, which may not yet have been achieved. On the other hand, a concept only asks for receptivity. It brings a content along with it, and is itself the tool of cultural development. Therefore we enthusiastically welcomed that beam of light directed down on us from the gloomy clouds by a most excellent thinker. One has to be a young man to visualize what an effect Lessing's *Laocoon*⁹⁹ had on us, this work that swept us away from the regions of meager contemplation and onto the open terrain of thought. The saying "Ut pictura poesis," so long misunderstood, was now suddenly set aside, and the difference between the pictorial and verbal arts was clear. The peaks of both now appeared separate, however closely they touched at the base. The graphic artist was to stay within the bounds of beauty, while the verbal artist, who cannot dispense with significance of whatever kind, might be permitted to roam beyond them. The former aims at an external sense, which beauty alone can satisfy, the latter at the imagination, which is quite able to come to terms with ugliness. The full consequence of this brilliant thought was illuminated for us as though by a flash of lightning. We cast off all previous critical instructions and judgments like a worn-out coat, we considered ourselves delivered from all evil, and we felt justified in looking down somewhat pityingly at the otherwise very magnificent sixteenth century. For in German art and poetry of that time life could only be visualized in the guise of a fool with cap and bells, death in the monstrous form of a clattering skeleton, and the necessary and accidental evils of this world in the image of a grotesque devil.

We were particularly charmed by the beautiful idea that the ancients acknowledged Death as the brother of Sleep¹⁰⁰ and depicted both so identically, as befits twins, that they are easily confused. Only now could we really celebrate the triumph of beauty and relegate ugliness of every kind to the lowly sphere of absurdity, at least in the realm of art (for it can never be banished from the world).

The splendor of such cardinal and fundamental concepts reveals itself only to a mind open to their boundless influence, and only to a time that is ripe and longs for them. Then those for whom such nourishment is appropriate will lovingly devote whole epochs of their lives to these concepts and rejoice in exuberant growth, whereas there are always people who will resist such influence and others who subsequently higgle and haggle about its lofty meaning.

However, since concept and contemplation must reinforce each other,

I could not ponder these new thoughts very long without feeling an infinite desire to see significant works of art in larger numbers. Therefore I resolved to make a short visit to Dresden. I did not lack the requisite funds, but there were difficulties of another kind to overcome, and I added to them unnecessarily with my eccentric ways, that is, by keeping my intention secret from everyone. I wanted to view the art treasures there entirely in my own way and, as I thought, without being distracted by anyone else. And one more whimsicality served to complicate this very simple affair.

We have both inborn and instilled foibles, and it might be worth discussing which of the two give us more trouble. Although I liked to become acquainted with every condition of life and had frequent occasion to do so, my father had inspired me with an extreme distaste for all inns. This attitude had firmly taken root in him on his travels through Italy, France, and Germany. While he rarely spoke in images and used them only when in very high spirits, nevertheless he would often repeat the following: He always imagined a giant spider web stretched across the gateway of inns, so artfully that insects could, to be sure, fly in, but not even the privileged wasps could fly out again unscathed. He thought it quite dreadful to have to pay exorbitantly for the privilege of giving up one's habits and everything one liked in life and living by the rule of the host and the waiters. He lauded the hospitality of ancient times, and even though he was loath to tolerate anything not routine in his house, he did practice hospitality, especially in regard to artists and virtuosos. Cousin Seekatz always stayed with us, and Abel,¹⁰¹ the last musician who understood how to play the viola da gamba properly, was well received and entertained. With childhood impressions like these, which so far nothing had erased, how could I bring myself to enter an inn in a strange town? Nothing would have been easier than to find quarters at the houses of good friends. Aulic Councilor Krebel, Assistant Judge Hermann,¹⁰² and others had often spoken to me about this earlier; but my trip was supposed to be kept a secret from them too, and at last I happened on the strangest idea. My fellow lodger, the studious theologian, whose eyes were unfortunately getting weaker and weaker, had a relative in Dresden, a cobbler, with whom he occasionally exchanged letters. For some time this man had seemed very remarkable to me because of how he expressed himself, and the arrival of one of his letters was always a festive occasion for us. The manner in which he replied to his cousin's laments about the probability of going blind was quite unique. He did not trouble himself with consoling arguments, which are always hard to find; but the cheerful way in which he looked at his own poor, narrow, weary life, his ability to joke even about evils and discomforts, his unshakable conviction that life in and of itself was a blessing—this communicated

itself to the reader of the letter and at least for moments put him in a like mood. In my usual enthusiastic way, I had often sent this man my cordial greetings, had praised his fortunate natural talent, and had expressed the wish to meet him. On the basis of all this, nothing seemed more natural to me than to look him up, converse with him, indeed stay with him and become well acquainted. After a bit of resistance, my good doctoral candidate wrote, with much difficulty, a letter I could take with me; and full of longing, with my certificate of introduction in my pocket, I drove off to Dresden in the yellow coach.

I looked for my cobbler and soon found him in an outlying section. He received me in a friendly way, sitting on his stool, and said with a smile, after having read the letter, "I see from this, young sir, that you are an odd sort of Christian." "How so, master?" I replied. "The 'odd' is not meant badly," he continued. "That is what someone is called who is inconsistent, and I call you an odd sort of Christian because you show yourself to be a follower of our Lord in one respect, but not in another." Upon my request for enlightenment, he said further, "It would seem to be your intention to proclaim a joyous message to the poor and lowly. That is fine, and such imitation of our Lord is commendable; but you should also consider that He preferred to sit at table with well-to-do and rich people, where things were nice. He did not even despise the fragrance of balsam, the opposite of which you may well find in my house."

This comical introduction put me into a good humor right away, and we exchanged banter for a considerable while. His wife stood there wondering how she should accommodate and entertain such a guest. Also on this score he had some very witty things to say, with allusions not only to the Bible but also to Gottfried's *Chronicle*. When we had agreed that I should stay, I gave my purse, just as it was, to my hostess for safekeeping and requested her to take from it whatever was necessary. When he wanted to refuse that and gave me to understand, with some roguishness, that he was not as hard up as it might look, I disarmed him by saying that such a proven home remedy would not be out of place, if it were a question, say, of changing water into wine—since miracles did not happen anymore nowadays. The mistress of the house appeared to be finding my speeches and actions less and less strange; we soon became adapted to each other and spent a very cheery evening. He was always consistent, because everything flowed from *one* source, and that was his good common sense, which was rooted in his cheerful spirit and was satisfied with the steady, traditional work he did. To work without ceasing, that was the first and most necessary thing for him; to see everything else as incidental, that is what kept him content; and I could not but place him ahead of many others in the class of those called practical philosophers or naive sages.

The impatiently awaited hour came for the gallery to be opened. I entered this sanctuary, and my amazement exceeded every expectation. This self-replicating hall, in which splendor and cleanliness reigned, together with the most complete stillness; the dazzling frames, every one of them recently gilded; the polished floor; these rooms, more for the use of spectators than for anyone working there—it all produced a feeling of solemnity unique of its kind. One felt as though one were entering a house of worship, and more particularly since the adornments of so many a temple and the objects of so much worship had been reinstalled here, only this time for the sacred purposes of art. I was quite ready to put up with the cursory guided tour, except that I requested the favor of being allowed to remain in the outer gallery. Here, to my delight, I felt completely at home. I had already seen works of several of these artists, others I knew through engravings, others by name. I did not conceal this and thus inspired my guide with some confidence in me; indeed, he was pleased when I went into raptures over pictures in which the brush improved on nature. It was such paintings, primarily, that attracted me. In them, a comparison with familiar nature could only emphasize the value of art.

When I returned to my cobbler's house to eat the midday meal, I could scarcely believe my eyes: I thought I was beholding a picture by Ostade,¹⁰³ perfect enough to be hung in the gallery as it was. Everything I had admired in his pictures: placement of objects, light, shadow, the brownish tint over everything, the magical harmony of parts—I saw here in reality. It was the first time that I became aware to such a high degree of a gift that I afterwards used more consciously, namely of seeing nature through the eyes of this or that artist whose works had recently been the object of my special attention. This ability provided me with much enjoyment, but it also increased my desire to indulge energetically from time to time in the exercise of a talent that nature seemed to have denied me.

I visited the gallery at all the permitted times, and continued rather assertively expressing my rapture over various exquisite works. Thereby I defeated my laudable intention of remaining unknown and unnoticed, and whereas previously only a subordinate overseer had dealt with me, now the gallery inspector, Councilor Riedel,¹⁰⁴ also took notice of me and brought many things to my attention that seemed to be within the scope of my interests. I found this excellent man to be as active and obliging then as I saw him continue to be for some years afterwards, and as he still shows himself to be today. For me, his image has become so interwoven with those art treasures that I never visualize them separately from him, indeed the memory of him accompanied me to Italy, where his presence would have been a very desirable thing to me in many large and rich collections.

Since one cannot view such works mutely and uncommunicatively even with strangers and unknown persons (rather, the sight of them is highly conducive to the mutual opening of hearts), I too struck up a conversation there with a young man who, I gathered, was staying in Dresden as member of a legation. He invited me to come to an inn that evening, where a lively group assembled and one could spend a few very pleasant hours, each one paying just a moderate amount.

I arrived but did not find the company, and I was a little amazed when the waiter extended me the compliments of the gentleman who had invited me, along with his apology for a somewhat later arrival and the additional message that I should not take offense at whatever might happen; and also that I should have nothing to pay beside my own bill. I did not know what to make of these words, but my father's spider webs occurred to me and I braced myself to await what might come. The company assembled, my acquaintance introduced me, and I did not have to listen very long before finding out that they planned to perpetrate a hoax on a young man who, for a newcomer, acted too brashly and presumptuously. Consequently I was very much on my guard lest they should perhaps fancy choosing me as a companion to him. At table their intentions became clearer to everyone except him. They went on drinking more and more heavily, and when at last they also shouted a "Vivat!" in honor of his beloved, then they all swore by everything holy that no one should ever again drink from these glasses. They threw them over their shoulders, and this was the signal for even greater nonsense. Finally I quite cautiously withdrew, and the waiter, after presenting me with a very small bill, besought me to come again, since things were not that wild every evening. It was a long way to my lodgings and nearly midnight when I reached them. I found the doors unlocked, everyone was in bed, and a lamp illuminated the meager furnishings of this household, whereupon my eye, growing ever more practiced, at once perceived the scene as though it were the most beautiful painting by Schalcken.¹⁰⁵ I could not dismiss it from my mind, and it banished all sleep.

I devoted the few days of my sojourn in Dresden exclusively to the gallery of paintings. The antique sculptures were still standing in the pavilions of the Great Garden, but I declined to see them, along with all the other choice things that Dresden contained, for I was too firmly convinced that much must still be concealed from me in and about the painting collection itself. For example, I was accepting the merit of the Italian painters on faith, and could not pretend to an understanding of them. If I could not view something as nature, substitute it for nature, or compare it with a familiar object, then it had no effect on me. It is the material impression that initiates every favorite pursuit even of the higher type.

I got along quite well with my cobbler. He was certainly quick-witted and full of variety, and we would sometimes vie with each other in the expression of droll ideas. However, a person who considers himself happy and requires others to do the same makes us uncomfortable, nay, the repetition of such sentiments becomes boring. I certainly found myself busy, entertained, and stimulated, but by no means happy, and shoes made to his last simply refused to fit me. Nevertheless, we parted the best of friends, and at the time of farewell my hostess was not displeased with me either.

Something very pleasant was still destined to happen to me shortly before my departure. The aforementioned young man wanted to regain some credit in my eyes, and through his good offices I was introduced to Director von Hagedorn,¹⁰⁶ who very kindly showed his collection to me and took great delight in a young art lover's enthusiasm. As befits a connoisseur, he was really enamoured of the pictures he owned, and therefore rarely found that other people's interest met his expectations. It especially pleased him that I liked a picture by Swanevelt¹⁰⁷ enormously and could not stop praising and exalting it in every single detail. Just such landscapes, which reminded me of the beautiful clear sky under which I grew up, the abundant plant life of those regions, and all the other favors which a relatively warm climate vouchsafes to mankind, touched me most when reproduced, because they awakened longing memories within me.

These wonderful experiences, which prepared my mind and senses for true art, were interrupted and muted, however, by the saddest of sights: the destruction and desolation of so many of the Dresden streets through which I walked. The Street of Moors in its ruins, as well as the Holy Cross Church with its shattered tower, made a deep impression on me and are still like a dark spot in my imagination. From the spire of Our Lady Church I saw these grievous ruins strewn about in the midst of the town's beautiful order. Then the sacristan spoke in praise of the masterbuilder's skill, for he had already prepared for such an undesirable happening and built this church and spire to be bombproof. Next, the good sacristan pointed at the ruins on all sides and said, in an expressively laconic way, "The enemy did that!"

So at last I returned, though reluctantly, to Leipzig and found my friends, who were not accustomed to such vagaries on my part, in great amazement and busy making all sorts of conjectures about the possible meaning of my mysterious trip. When I thereupon related my story quite honestly, they declared it a fiction and tried ingeniously to ferret out the puzzling secret I had been mischievous enough to conceal behind this tale of lodging with a cobbler.

Had they been able to look into my heart, however, they would have discovered no mischief in it, for the truth of that old saying, "Increase

of knowledge is increase of disquiet," had hit me with full force, and the more I strove to sort out and assimilate what I had seen, the less I succeeded. Eventually I had to be content with a hidden residual effect. Ordinary life took hold of me again, and in the end it was a comfortable feeling when the company of friends, the acquisition of some manageable knowledge, and a bit of writing occupied me in a less significant manner, but one more in proportion to my abilities.

A very pleasant and, for me, wholesome connection was the one I made with the house of Breilkopf. Bernard Christoph Breilkopf, the actual founder of the family, had come to Leipzig as a poor journeyman printer. He was still alive and resided in the Golden Bear, a stately building on the New Newmarket, where Gottsched also dwelt. The son, Johann Gottlob Immanuel, also had been married for a long time and was the father of several children. They thought there was no better way to use a part of their considerable fortune than to erect a large new building, the Silver Bear, across from the first one, and it was planned to be loftier and more spacious than the family seat itself. I became acquainted with the family just during the time of construction. The eldest son may have been a few years older than I, a handsome young man who loved music and was an expert pianist and violinist. The second son, a good, faithful soul, was also musical and took no less lively a part than the eldest in the concerts that were frequently organized. Both of them, as well as their parents and sisters, were fond of me, and I was helpful to them with the building and finishing, the furnishing and the moving in, and thus gained an understanding of many things connected with such an operation. I also had the opportunity of seeing Oeser's doctrines applied. I was a frequent visitor in the new house that I had now seen come into existence. We collaborated on many things, and the eldest son set some of my songs to music. When they were printed they bore his name but not mine, and they have not become well known. I have culled out the better ones and included them among my other small poems. Their father had invented or perfected the printing of music. He allowed me the use of a fine library, which dealt mostly with the origin and growth of printing, so that I acquired some knowledge in this field. Moreover I found good engravings there with subjects drawn from antiquity, and could also continue my studies in this area, being helped along further by the fact that a large collection of sulphur casts of antique gems had fallen into disorder during the removal. I put it to rights as well as I could, being compelled while doing so to look around in Lippert¹⁰⁸ and other books. From time to time I consulted a physician, Doctor Reichel,¹⁰⁹ who also resided there, since I did not feel very well, although I was not ill, and so we led a quiet, pleasant life together.

Next I was to enter into another kind of association in this house.

That is to say, the copperplate engraver Stock¹¹⁰ moved into the attic. He was a native of Nuremberg, a very industrious man, exact and orderly in his work. Like Geyser, he engraved larger and smaller plates after Oeser's drawings, which were becoming more and more in demand for novels and poems. He etched very cleanly, so that the work emerged from the nitric acid almost complete, and nothing remained except to finish it off a little with the burin, which he used skillfully. He would make an exact estimate of how long it would take to do a plate, and nothing could call him away from his work until he had completed the assignment planned for each day. So he sat at a broad work table by a large gable window, in a very neat, clean room, where his wife and two daughters¹¹¹ kept him company at home. Of the latter, one is happily married and the other an excellent artist; they have remained my life-long friends. I now divided my time between the upper and lower floors and became very attached to this man, who for all that he never stopped working had a splendid disposition and was the embodiment of good nature.

I was fascinated by the clean-cut technique of this type of art, and I stayed by his side so that I could also make something of the kind. I had become inclined toward landscape again, for on my lonely walks it appeared diverting to me, and basically within reach, and as though more comprehensible in art works than the human figure, which intimidated me. Therefore under his guidance I etched various landscapes after Thiele¹¹² and others which, in spite of being done by my unpracticed hand, still were fairly effective and received some praise. There were manifold activities involved in priming the plates, in painting them white, in the etching process itself, and finally in the corrosive bath, and I soon advanced to the point where I could be of considerable assistance to my master. I did not fail to be properly watchful during the acid treatment, and rarely did anything go wrong for me; but I was not cautious enough in protecting myself against the injurious vapors which ordinarily develop from this process, and they may well have contributed to the evils that afterwards tormented me for some time. Occasionally, in order to have tried everything, I varied my work by making woodcuts. I carved several little tailpieces from French models, and a number of them were found usable.

Let me mention here a few more men who lived in Leipzig or were staying there for a short while. District Tax Collector Weisse, a man in his prime, cheerful, friendly, and obliging, was liked and esteemed by us. Although we were not willing to agree that his plays were altogether perfect, we were certainly enthralled by them, and his operas, gracefully set to music by Hiller,¹¹³ gave us much pleasure. Schiebler,¹¹⁴ from Hamburg, trod the same path, and his *Lisuart and Dariolette* also found favor with us. Eschenburg,¹¹⁵ a handsome young man only a few

years older than we, stood out to advantage from among the other students. Zachariä consented to stay among us for several weeks and, having been introduced by his brother, dined with us at the same table. As was only proper, we regarded ourselves honored to be taking turns favoring our guest with a few choice dishes, a more lavish dessert, and a more select wine. He was a large, stout, easy-going man, who made no secret of his fondness for good food and drink. Lessing arrived at a time when we had some foolish idea in our heads, I know not what. We chose not to go anywhere on his account, indeed to avoid the places he was coming to, probably because we were too proud to stand at a distance and yet could not presume to get into any kind of close relationship with him. This momentary silliness, which, however, is not rare among arrogant and capricious young people, was of course subsequently punished, for I never did see this most excellent man with my own eyes, though I esteemed him highly.

However, in all our efforts relating to art and antiquity each of us always looked toward Winckelmann, whose great virtues were enthusiastically appreciated in his native land. We diligently read his works and tried to acquaint ourselves with the circumstances under which he wrote the first ones. We found many ideas in them which seemed to have been derived from Oeser, indeed even his sort of jokes and crotchets, and we did not rest until we had approximately reconstructed the situation that had given rise to these remarkable and yet sometimes so puzzling works. It is true that we were not very precise about this, for young people prefer inspiration to instruction, and this was not the last time I was to be indebted to sibylline pages for a significant step forwards in my cultural development.

Those were fine times for literature, when excellent men were still shown respect, although Klotz's quarrels and Lessing's controversies¹¹⁶ already indicated that the epoch would soon come to a close. Winckelmann enjoyed this kind of universal, undisputed veneration, and it is known how sensitive he was about anything of a public nature that seemed not to be in keeping with his dignity, of which he was very conscious. All the periodicals united in praise of him, the better sort of travelers came back instructed and charmed by him, and the new views that he expressed broadly influenced scholarship and life. The prince of Dessau¹¹⁷ had risen to similar esteem. Young, open, and noble-minded, he had made a most agreeable impression during his travels and otherwise. Winckelmann could not have been more charmed by him and never mentioned him without adding the most complimentary epithets. His park, with a design unique for those times, his taste for architecture, which was backed up by von Erdmannsdorff's¹¹⁸ activity, all this commended a sovereign who promised his servants and subjects a golden age and by his example lighted the way for others. Now we

young people rejoiced to hear that Winckelmann was returning from Italy, would visit his princely friend, stop by on his way to see Oeser, and so also come within range of us. We did not expect to talk to him, but we hoped to see him; and since, at that age, one likes to make a pleasure trip out of any and every occasion, we had already arranged to go to Dessau on horseback and by coach. There, in that beautiful region that had been glorified by art, in that well-governed and also outwardly embellished land, we intended to be on the lookout everywhere for those men whose position was so far above ours, to see them with our own eyes as they strolled about. Oeser himself was in raptures just at the thought of it, and then, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, the news of Winckelmann's death¹¹⁹ struck down on us. I can still recall the spot where I first heard it: the courtyard of the Pleissenburg, not far from the little door through which we used to go up to Oeser. A fellow pupil came toward me, told me that Oeser was not receiving anyone, and the reason why. This monstrous event made an enormous stir; there was universal mourning and lamenting, and his premature death made everyone still more conscious of the value of his life. Indeed his endeavors, if continued into a more advanced age, might not have had as great an influence as they would inevitably have now that he, like some other outstanding persons, had also been designated by fate to meet a strange and horrible death.

But now while I was endlessly mourning Winckelmann's passing, it did not occur to me that I would soon find myself concerned for my own life; for in the midst of all this my physical condition had not taken a very favorable turn. I had already brought along from home a certain tendency to hypochondria, which was intensified rather than weakened by my new sedentary and slow-moving mode of life. The chest pain I had felt from time to time since the accident in Auerstädt, which had gotten noticeably worse after a fall while riding horseback, made me peevish. I ruined my digestive powers with an unwise diet; the heavy Merseburg beer clouded my brain; coffee, which put me into a particularly triste mood, especially when drunk with milk after eating, paralyzed my intestines and seemed to halt their functions completely; consequently I felt great oppression, but still could not resolve to live in a more rational manner. My nature, which was adequately sustained by youthful energy, wavered between the extremes of exuberant merriment and melancholy dissatisfaction. Furthermore, the era of cold bathing had begun at that time, and this was unconditionally recommended. One was supposed to sleep on a hard bed, only lightly covered, and this, of course, suppressed all the customary perspiration. These and other follies, resulting from misunderstood recommendations by Rousseau, would, it was promised, lead us back to nature and rescue us from the decay of morals. All the above, applied indiscriminately

and alternated irrationally, were felt by some people to be most injurious, and I goaded my healthy constitution with them to the point that the individual systems contained within it were finally forced into conspiracy and open revolution in order to save the whole.

One night I was awakened by a violent hemorrhage,¹²⁰ and just retained enough strength and presence of mind to awaken my fellow lodger. Doctor Reichel was called and provided me most friendly assistance, but I hovered several days between life and death. Even my joy at the subsequent improvement was marred by the fact that along with that gush of blood a swelling had formed on the left side of my neck which no one had had time to notice until now, when the danger was past. However, recuperation is always pleasant and comforting, even when it proceeds slowly and wretchedly; and since nature had taken me in hand, I also seemed to have become a different person now, for I had gained a greater cheerfulness of spirit than I had known for a long time, and I was happy to feel inwardly free, even though a protracted illness threatened me outwardly.

But what especially heartened me at this time was to see how many excellent men bestowed an undeserved affection on me. Undeserved, I say, for there was not one among them that I had not afflicted with my obnoxious moodiness, not one whom I had not offended more than once with my morbid nonsense, indeed whom I, feeling myself to be in the wrong, had not obstinately avoided for a while. All this was forgotten, they treated me most lovingly, and tried to amuse and distract me, first in my room, and then after I could leave it. They drove out with me, entertained me at their country places, and I seemed to be recovering already.

Among these friends I should probably first mention Doctor Hermann, who then was councilor and later became burgomaster of Leipzig. He was one of the table companions I met through Schlosser, and the only one with whom I kept up a steady and lasting relationship. He could no doubt be ranked among the most industrious members of the academic community. He attended his lectures very regularly, and his diligence in private never varied. I watched him attain his doctoral degree step by step, without the slightest deviation, then advance to the assistant judgeship, and nothing about it seemed to be an effort for him, nothing appeared to have been either delayed or rushed. The gentleness of his character attracted me, while his instructive conversation captivated me. Indeed I really believe that his orderly diligence mainly delighted me because I hoped that I might at least partly assimilate this merit, which I myself certainly could not boast of, through my recognition and esteem.

He was just as regular in the exercise of his talents and the enjoyment of his pleasures as he was in his affairs. He played the piano with great

skill, sketched feelingly from nature, and encouraged me to do the same. Thereupon it became my habit to take black and white chalk to gray paper, in his manner, and draw many a clump of willows beside the Pleisse and many a lovely bend in these quiet waters, always indulging my wistful fancies while doing so. He knew how to respond to my occasionally comic moods with cheerful jokes, and I recall the many pleasant hours we spent together when he, with mock solemnity, would invite me to an evening meal where just the two of us, with great ceremony by the light of wax candles, would devour a so-called "council hare," which had found its way into his kitchen as a perquisite of his position; and we liked to spice the food and enhance the spirit of the wine with many a bit of nonsense in Behrisch's style. The fact that this excellent man, who is still continuously active in his important office, supported me most loyally in my illness (the whole gravity of which was suspected but not clearly foreseen), that he devoted every free hour to me and was able to brighten gloomy moments by reminding me of former merry times, is something that I shall always acknowledge with sincerest gratitude, and I am glad that I can express this publicly now after so long a time.

In addition to this dear friend, Gröning¹²¹ from Bremen was especially solicitous of me. I had only become acquainted with him shortly beforehand, and I did not realize how much good will he had toward me until the calamity took place. I valued his kindness all the more highly because I knew that no one is very prone to seek closer associations with sick people. He spared no pains to amuse me, to divert me from brooding over my condition, and to predict and promise me recovery and active health in the very near future. How often have I rejoiced to hear in later life that this excellent man has proved to be useful and beneficial to his native town in very important matters.

It was at this juncture too that friend Horn unceasingly demonstrated his affection and attentiveness. The whole house of Breitkopf, the Stock family, and many others treated me like a close relative, and thus through the kindness of so many friendly people the distress I felt about my condition was most tenderly assuaged.

I must mention here in greater detail, however, a man whom I had just met at this time and whose instructive conversation so beguiled me that I quite forgot my sad situation. This was Langer,¹²² afterwards librarian in Wolfenbüttel. Himself the product of excellent schooling and instruction, he rejoiced in my voracious appetite for knowledge, which owing to my present morbid sensitivity was expressed with feverish intensity. He tried to calm me by means of explicit summaries, and although our association was short I became very much indebted to him, since he understood how to guide me in various things and alerted me to the direction in which I should be moving at present. I

found myself even more obligated to this significant man by the fact that his association with me exposed him to some peril. For when he succeeded Behrisch as the tutor of young Count Lindenau, the father had expressly stipulated that the new mentor was not to have anything to do with me. Curious to meet such a dangerous individual, he managed to see me several times at a prearranged place. I soon won his affection, and he, being shrewder than Behrisch, would stop by for me in the nighttime. We would go walking together and converse about interesting things. At last I would accompany him to his sweetheart's door, for even this serious, scholarly, stern-looking man had been unable to escape the net cast by a very amiable young woman.

For some time I had become estranged from German literature and, along with that, my own attempts at poetry. As usually happens with such autodidactic meanderings, I turned again to my beloved ancients, who, like distant mountains, distinct in outline but blurred in detail and inner relationships, still bounded the horizon of my intellectual desires. I made a bargain with Langer in which I played both Glaucus and Diomedes. I ceded him whole basketsful of German poets and critics and in return received a number of Greek authors, whose use would refresh me throughout even the slowest recovery.

New friends usually bestow their confidence on each other by degrees. Common activities and favorite pursuits are the first things in which mutual agreement becomes evident; then conversation tends to explore past and present enthusiasms, and especially amorous adventures. Something deeper, however, must be disclosed if the relationship is to become complete, and that is religious sentiments, those concerns of the heart that involve imperishable values and give a friendship both its firm foundation and its crowning adornment.

The Christian religion was wavering between its own historical positivism and a pure deism which, being based on ethical thought, was supposed to reestablish morality. Differences in character and ways of thinking were evident here in infinite gradations, but the underlying chief difference was over the question about how much part reason, and how much part feelings, could and should play in such convictions. In this situation, the liveliest and most quick-witted men showed themselves to be like butterflies, who, quite forgetting they were ever caterpillars, discard the cocoon in which they have developed to organic completeness. Others, of more loyal and modest disposition, could be compared to flowers, which do not detach themselves from the root, or parent stem, while unfolding into most beautiful blossom; indeed, and to the contrary, it is only through this connection that they bring the desired fruit to ripeness. Langer was of the latter sort: although a scholar and excellent judge of books, he preferred to grant the Bible a special priority over other traditional writings and to view it as the

only document on which we can base a demonstration of our moral and spiritual genealogy. He was among those who cannot conceive of any direct contact with the great God of the universe; therefore, he felt the need of some mediation, the analogue to which he believed he found everywhere in earthly and heavenly things. His discourse, both pleasant and logical, found easy acceptance in a young man who, being cut off from earthly things by a troublesome illness, was more than glad to turn his lively mind to heavenly ones. Well versed in the Bible as I was, it was now merely a question of faith to declare this book, which I had lately esteemed from a human standpoint, to be divine; and this was all the easier for me since it had originally been introduced to me as divine. To a sufferer, to someone with tender, even effete sensibilities, the Gospel was something welcome. And despite the fact that Langer, for all his faith, was a very reasonable man who insisted that feeling must not be allowed to predominate and lead one astray into fanaticism, I could not possibly have applied myself to the New Testament without emotion and enthusiasm.

We passed much time in such conversation, and he grew so fond of me as his staunch and well-prepared proselyte that he did not scruple to give up for me many an hour that actually was meant for his sweetheart. Indeed he even risked being betrayed and incurring the displeasure of his patron, like Behrisch. I most gratefully returned his affection, and although his service would have been worthy of esteem at any time, I could not help but appreciate it especially in my current situation.

But it is usually when one's mental harmonies are attuned most spiritually that the rough, shrill tones of the bustling world intrude most forcefully and boisterously, and the contrast, which always keeps operating in secret, has all the more painful effect when it suddenly comes out into the open. So I was not to be released from my Langer's peripatetic school without first having experienced what was, for Leipzig at least, an unusual event, namely a tumult stirred up by the students, and for the following reason: The young men had fallen out with the town militia, and this had involved some physical violence. A number of students banded together to avenge the offenses done them. The soldiers resisted stubbornly, and the advantage was not on the side of the very disgruntled citizens of academe. Then the word went around that eminent persons had praised and rewarded the victors for their valiant resistance, and this presented a powerful challenge to youthful feelings of honor and revenge. It was being publicly rumored that windows were going to be broken the next evening, and when some friends reported that this was actually in progress, I prevailed on them to take me there, since young people and the crowd are always drawn by danger and tumult. A strange spectacle was actually underway. The otherwise clear street was lined on one side by people who were calmly waiting,

without noise and commotion, to see what would happen. There were perhaps a dozen young men walking back and forth, individually, on the empty thoroughfare, seemingly with the greatest nonchalance. However, as soon as they came near and passed the designated house they threw stones at its windows, and did this repeatedly as they went back and forth, as long as there were panes that would clatter. This finally ended just as calmly as it began, and the affair had no further consequences.

Amidst the shrill reverberations of such academic exploits I drove away from Leipzig in September, 1768, in a hired coachman's comfortable vehicle and in the company of some trustworthy acquaintances of mine. In the vicinity of Auerstädt I was reminded of my earlier accident, but I had no inkling of the greater peril that would some day threaten me from that quarter.¹²³ Nor in Gotha, where we were guided through the castle and I stood in that great hall with its ornamental stucco work, could I imagine that so much gracious kindness would be shown me in this very spot.¹²⁴

The more closely I approached my native town, the more pensive I became, as I recalled under what conditions and with what prospects and hopes I had left home, and I felt very depressed about returning now like a castaway, as it were. But since I did not have too much to reproach myself for, I was able to remain fairly calm. Yet my reception was not without some turbulence. My extremely excitable nature, made even more highly sensitive by illness, brought on an emotional scene. Evidently I looked worse than I myself realized, for I had not consulted a mirror for a long time, and who does not get accustomed to his own appearance? Suffice it to say, we tacitly agreed to postpone various questions and first to allow some calm, both physical and mental, to descend.

My sister at once attached herself to me, and now I could hear in more precise detail about the family's situation and the conditions at which her letters had hinted. After my departure my father had let her bear the whole brunt of his didactic dilettantism, and by keeping her in the closed-up house, which was now not only secured by the peace but also emptied of renters, had cut her off from practically every means of finding a little sociability and diversion outside. She had to study and work on French, Italian, and English alternately, and was also required to practice piano for a great part of the day. Writing could not be neglected either, and I had certainly noticed beforehand that he was supervising her correspondence with me and was having his teachings communicated to me through her pen. My sister was and remained an indefinable nature, the strangest mixture of sternness and softness, of stubbornness and tractability, and sometimes these characteristics operated in unison, sometimes—by will and inclination—individually.

Thus, in a way that seemed dreadful to me, she had adopted a very hard attitude toward our father, and could not forgive him for having held her back from or spoiled so many an innocent pleasure during these three years; and she absolutely refused to recognize any of his good and excellent qualities. She did everything that he ordered or directed, but in the most ungracious way imaginable. She did it according to regulations, but not a jot more or less. She would not accommodate herself to anything for love or courtesy, and this was one of the first things my mother complained to me about in a confidential conversation. But since my sister was as much in need of love as any other human being, she now bestowed her affection completely on me. Her attention to my care and entertainment consumed all of her time. Her girl friends, whom she dominated without realizing it, likewise had to devise all sorts of ways to please and console me. She was inventive in her efforts to cheer me, and even produced a few sparks of antic humor, which I had never known her to possess but found very becoming to her. Soon we evolved a private language between the two of us, so that we could talk in front of other people without being understood, and she was frequently impudent enough to use this argot in our parents' presence.

Personally, my father was in rather good spirits. He felt well, spent a large part of the day on my sister's instruction, worked on his travel book, and did more tuning than playing on his lute. Meanwhile he concealed as well as possible his disappointment at finding, not a robust, active son about to take his doctorate and make strides in his prescribed career, but a valetudinarian who seemed to be more afflicted in mind than in body. He did not disguise his desire to see my cure expedited, and I especially had to guard against making any hypochondriacal remarks in his presence, because then he could become bitter and vehement.

My mother, who was by nature very vivacious and cheerful, spent some most tedious days on account of these circumstances. The small household was soon taken care of. The good woman's mind was never idle and also looked for an interest, religion being the thing nearest at hand. She took this up all the more gladly since her best women friends were cultivated, sincere devotees. Foremost among them was Miss von Klettenberg.¹²⁵ This is the same person whose letters and conversations inspired the "Confessions of a Beautiful Soul" that are to be found inserted in *Wilhelm Meister*.¹²⁶ She was of medium height and delicately built, and her naturally cordial demeanor had been rendered still more agreeable by her training in urbane and courtly manners. Her very neat costume was reminiscent of the dress of Moravian sisters. Her cheerfulness and peace of mind never forsook her. She regarded her illness as a necessary component of her temporary existence on earth; she

suffered with the utmost patience, and in pain-free intervals she was animated and talkative. Her favorite, perhaps her sole, subject of conversation consisted of the moral experiences a person can gain from observing himself; and to this were added religious sentiments, which she, in her very charming, indeed brilliant manner, considered both in their natural and supernatural context. Hardly more need be said to make anyone who was partial to those presentations of hers remember how she would describe in detail the workings of her soul. The very individual course she had followed from youth on, the more aristocratic class in which she had been born and reared, and the liveliness and peculiarity of her mind prevented her from getting along very well with the other women who had struck out on the same path to salvation. The best of these, Mrs. Griesbach,¹²⁷ seemed too stern, too dry, too scholarly; she knew, thought, and comprehended more than the others, who were content with developing their feelings, and so she was burdensome to them: not everyone could or would drag along such a large apparatus on her way to bliss! On the other hand, most of them, frankly speaking, grew a little monotonous with their persistence in a certain terminology which might well be compared with that of the later "people of sensibility." Miss von Klettenberg steered her way between the two extremes and seemed, a little smugly, to see herself reflected in the image of Count Zinzendorf,¹²⁸ whose sentiments and activities attested to his higher birth and more aristocratic status. In me she now found what she needed: a young, lively nature striving for some unknown salvation and, while not considering itself extraordinarily sinful, still in a far from comfortable condition and not quite healthy in either body or soul. She was delighted with my natural gifts as well as with much of what I had acquired. And it was by no means humiliating for her to concede me my many advantages, for in the first place it did not occur to her to compete with a male, and secondly she considered herself far superior to me in religious culture. My restlessness, my impatience, my striving, my seeking, inquiring, pondering, and wavering were interpreted by her in her own fashion, and instead of concealing her convictions she bluntly informed me that this was all a result of my not having a reconciled God. Actually, from childhood on I had believed myself to be on quite good terms with my God, indeed after various experiences I even imagined that He might be in my debt, and I was bold enough to think it was for me to forgive Him some things. This conceited notion was based on my feeling that He should have assisted me more in the exercise of my infinite good will. It can be imagined how often my friend and I got into an argument about this, which, however, would always end very amicably and sometimes, like my conversations with the old rector, with her saying that I was a mad fellow for whom one had to make many allowances.

I was much plagued with the swelling on my neck, since the physician and the surgeon first wanted to make it go down, then, as they said, to bring it to a head, and finally they decided to lance it. Therefore, for quite some time I had more to bear from discomfort than from pain, although toward the end of the cure their endless dabbing with lunar caustic and other corrosive substances could not but give me very disagreeable prospects for each new day. This physician and surgeon were also among those pious separatists, although both were of very different nature. The surgeon, a slim, handsome man with a skilled, gentle hand, was unfortunately somewhat consumptive but bore his condition with truly Christian patience and did not let the illness interfere with his profession. The physician¹²⁹ was an inscrutable, generally abstruse man who spoke in a friendly way while glancing slyly about, and in pietistic circles he had earned himself everyone's particular confidence. It was a comfort to sick people that he was so alert and watchful; but what extended his practice more than anything else was his talent for hinting that there were some mysterious nostrums in the background, of his own preparation, which no one might speak about because our laws strictly forbade physicians to dispense their own remedies. He did not act so secretively about certain powders, which were evidently some sort of digestive; but those notable salts, which could only be administered in the most desperate cases, were discussed solely by the true believers, none of whom had ever seen them or felt their effects. In order to excite and strengthen faith in the possibility of such a panacea, the physician, whenever he discovered any receptivity whatever in his patients, recommended that they read certain mystical, chemical-alchemical books and gave them to understand that by studying these very hard it would be possible to attain this treasure oneself; and this would be all the more necessary since the preparation could not well change hands, for physical but especially for moral reasons. Indeed one would have to know the secrets of nature and their interrelation in order to understand, produce, and use that great work, because it was not something individual but something universal and could well be produced in various shapes and forms. My friend had hearkened to these seductive words. The welfare of the body was only too closely related to the welfare of the soul, and could there be a greater benefit, a greater mercy extended to others than to acquire a remedy with which to quiet so much suffering and to avert so much danger? She had already studied Welling's *Opus mago-cabbalisticum*¹³⁰ in secret, but since this author himself continues to obscure and nullify the light he communicates, she was looking about for a friend who would keep her company amid this alternating light and darkness. Only a slight stimulus was needed for me to become inoculated with the same disease. I procured the work, which, like all writings of the kind, could trace its genealogy

back in a straight line to the Neo-Platonic school. My main endeavor with this book was to watch very closely for the obscure indications by which the author points from one passage to another, promising that this will reveal what he is concealing, and to mark down in the margin the page numbers of these reciprocally illuminating passages. But even so the book remained very obscure and incomprehensible. It was possible finally to study one's way into a certain terminology and, by using this as one pleased, to feel that one was at least saying something, if not understanding anything. The work in question mentions its precursors with all honor, and therefore we were inspired to look up those sources ourselves. We now turned, trying to understand and apply them, to the works of Theophrastus Paracelsus¹³¹ and Basilius Valentinus,¹³² but also to Helmont,¹³³ Starkey,¹³⁴ and others whose teachings and precepts were based more or less on nature and imagination. I was especially drawn to the *Aurea Catena Homeri*,¹³⁵ which represents nature in a beautiful, though perhaps fantastic, synthesis. And so, sometimes alone, sometimes together, we devoted a great deal of time to these curiosities, and the evenings of the long winter during which I had to keep to my room were spent very pleasantly, since we three (my mother was included) took more delight in the mysteries themselves than we could ever have gotten from their elucidation.

In the meantime another very hard ordeal was being prepared for me: My disordered and, one might well say, in certain respects ruined, digestion produced such alarming symptoms that I thought I was going to die, and none of the remedies they applied seemed to help anymore. In this dire necessity my afflicted mother, with the greatest vehemence, compelled the embarrassed physician to come forward with his panacea. After long resistance he hurried home late at night and returned with a little glassful of dry, crystallized salts, which were dissolved in water and swallowed by the patient. They had a decidedly alkaline taste. Hardly were the salts taken when the condition was alleviated, and from that moment on the illness took a turn that gradually led to recovery. One can imagine how much this strengthened our faith in the physician and intensified our efforts to share in this treasure.

My friend, who lived without parents or siblings in a large, well-situated house, even before all this had equipped herself with a small natural-draft furnace, as well as with alembics and retorts of a moderate size. She was experimenting, according to pointers in Welling and significant hints from the physician and master, especially with iron, in which, if it could be dissolved, very curative powers were said to be latent. And because aerial salt played a great role in all the writings known to us and had to be distilled, alkalis were also required for these experiments. They dissolve on contact with air and were therefore said

to combine with those superterrestrial things and finally produce *per se* a mysterious and excellent middle-salt.

Hardly was I so far restored to health that I could take advantage of the warmer season and stay again in my old room under the gable, when I too began to assemble a small apparatus. A little natural-draft furnace and a sand bath were set up, and I very soon learned how to use a burning slow match to turn glass flasks into bowls for evaporating various mixtures. Now strange ingredients of the macrocosm and microcosm were treated in a curious, mysterious manner, and the primary goal was to produce middle-salts in an unheard-of way. However, what mainly occupied me for a long while was the so-called "Liquor silicum" (soluble glass), which is formed when pure silicon quartz is fused with a sufficient amount of alkali. There emerges from this a transparent glass that dissolves in the air and becomes a pretty, clear liquid. Anyone who has made this himself and seen it with his own eyes will not blame people for believing in a *prima materia* and the possibility of producing other effects on and through it. I acquired a special skill in preparing this soluble glass. The fine white pebbles to be found in the Main provide the perfect material for it, and I had a good supply of other things, as well as of diligence. But I finally grew weary when it became obvious that the silicon was by no means as closely combined with the salt as I had believed in my philosophy, for it was all too easily expelled again. However beautiful the mineral liquid was (and several times, to my greatest amazement, it took the form of an animal jelly), it always shed a powder that I had to admit was the finest silicon dust, and there was certainly nothing at all productive detectible in its nature, nothing to arouse one's hopes of seeing this virginal *prima materia* make the transition to motherhood.

Strange and disconnected as these experiments were, I learned many things from them. I carefully observed all the crystallizations that chanced to come about and became acquainted with the outward form of many natural things. Being well aware that in modern times chemical subject matter is more methodically presented, I wanted to acquire some general concept of it, although as a novice alchemist I had very little respect for apothecaries and all those who used ordinary fire in their work. Meanwhile I was strongly drawn to Boerhaave's¹³⁶ compendium of chemistry, and this induced me to read several other works by him, with the result (since in any case my protracted illness had awakened my interest in medical matters) that I also found my way to the study of this excellent man's *Aphorisms*, which I wished to impress on my mind and memory.

Another, somewhat more human and by far more useful occupation, as far as my immediate cultural development was concerned, was to

examine the letters I had written home from Leipzig. Nothing can give us more insight into ourselves than a second look at something produced by us several years earlier, in which we can view ourselves objectively. But of course at that time I was still too young, and the epoch represented by these papers was still too near. Generally speaking, in one's younger years it is not easy to resist feeling somewhat smugly conceited; and this is especially evident in the way we look scornfully at ourselves as we were in the recent past. For as one gradually becomes aware of having been mistaken about what qualities were excellent in oneself or others, one thinks that the best way of getting over this embarrassment is to discard what cannot be salvaged. That is what I did. Just as in Leipzig I had learned bit by bit to despise my childhood efforts, so now my academic career also seemed contemptible, and I did not realize that the very fact it had raised me to a higher level of observation and insight was in itself necessarily of great value to me. My father had carefully collected my letters to him and my sister and bound them; indeed he had even carefully corrected them in regard to spelling and grammar.

What struck me first about these letters was their outward appearance: I was shocked by how incredibly I had neglected my handwriting from October, 1765, up to the middle of the following January. Then, suddenly, in the second half of March, a very calm, orderly handwriting emerged, such as I otherwise used for prize competitions. My amazement about this ended in gratitude to dear old Gellert, for it came back to me now that when he assigned us essays to hand in he would, in his sincere tone, urge us by all that was holy to practice our handwriting as much as, and even more than, our style. He repeated this whenever he was presented with a carelessly scribbled paper, and at such times had been heard to say more than once that he would really like to make his pupils' handwriting the main goal of his instruction, having noticed often enough that good handwriting fostered a good style.

I noticed also that the French and English passages in my letters, though not flawless, were written freely and with ease. I had continued to practice these languages in my correspondence with Georg Schlosser too. He was still in Treptow, and since we had remained in constant touch, I got information about how conditions were in the world (for his situation was still not quite up to his expectations) and I became ever more convinced of his high-minded seriousness.

Another observation I could not avoid making as I read through the letters was that my good father, with the best of intentions, had signally injured me and had been the cause of my eventually falling into an odd manner of living. That is to say, he had repeatedly warned me against playing cards; but Aulic Councilor Böhme's wife, as long as she was alive, was able to influence me in her way by declaring that my father's

admonition had only been aimed at abuses. Since I recognized the social advantages involved, I was glad to let myself be governed by her. While I had the mind for cards, I did not have the heart for them. I learned all the games quickly and easily, but I could never remain engrossed in them for a whole evening. So although I might start out quite well, in the end I would always falter and make myself and others lose, on which account I would invariably either go to the supper table feeling out of sorts, or just leave the party. Besides, during her extended illness Madame Böhme had no longer urged me to play; and hardly had she passed on when my father's precept resumed its sway. At first I excused myself from playing, but then no one knew how to entertain me in any other way, and so I became more of a burden to myself than to others. I refused invitations, which then began to arrive less frequently and finally ceased altogether. Although card-playing should be highly recommended to young people, especially those of practical mind who want to get about in the world, it could never become one of my favorite pastimes because, play as long as I would, I never made any progress. Had someone given me a general overview, pointing out certain signals here which, together with the element of chance, form a kind of substance to practice one's judgment and alertness on; or had I been required to learn the fine points of several games simultaneously; then perhaps I would have become reconciled to playing. In any case, these observations, which I made at the period now under discussion, convinced me that one should not avoid social games but instead try to become skillful at them. Time is infinitely long, and each single day is a vessel into which much can be poured if one is intent on filling it completely.

So I had many things to keep me busy in my solitude, especially since various ghosts of the manifold pursuits I had devoted myself to over the years now had the opportunity to reappear. Thus I began drawing again, and since I wanted to work directly from nature, or rather, from reality, I sketched my room and its furnishings, as well as the persons in it; and when that no longer amused me I took my inspiration from all sorts of stories that were going around town and people found interesting. My pictures were not without character and a certain amount of taste, but unfortunately the figures lacked proportion and real substance, and the execution was also extremely nebulous. My father, who continued to find some pleasure in these things, wished them to be more distinct; he also wanted everything to be finished and done completely. Therefore he had them mounted and set within lines; indeed his house artist, the painter Morgenstern¹³⁷—the same who later not only became known but famous for his views of churches—had to draw in perspective lines for the rooms and spaces, which then, of course, contrasted rather glaringly with the nebulously suggested fig-

ures. His thought was to impel me toward greater precision by this means, and in order to please him I sketched several still lifes, in which I managed to work more distinctly and definitely, since I had an actual model before me. Eventually the idea of etching occurred to me again. I had composed a rather interesting landscape, and I felt very happy at being able to exhume the old formulas given me by Stock and, while working, to remember those pleasant times. I soon etched the plate and had some proof-impressions made. Unfortunately the composition lacked light and shadow, and so I toiled to introduce both; but since I was not quite clear about how this was done, I could not accomplish it. At that time I was feeling relatively well; but then, in these days an evil befell me that had never troubled me before. That is, my throat became quite sore, with particular inflammation of the part called the uvula. I found it very painful to swallow, and the physicians did not know what to make of it. They tormented me with gargling and daubing, but could not free me from my distress. Finally, as though by inspiration, it came to me that I had not been careful enough while etching, and since I did this so often and so eagerly I had brought this evil on myself and constantly renewed and increased it. This seemed a plausible explanation to the physicians, and soon they were certain of it, for I left off etching and using corrosives. This was not so hard for me to do since the attempt had not been at all successful, and I had more cause to hide my work than to display it. My consolation for this was to see myself quickly freed of the troublesome complaint. Consequently I could not help thinking that similar activities in Leipzig might well have contributed to those maladies from which I had suffered so much. Of course it is a tiresome and occasionally sad business when we pay too much heed to ourselves and what may injure or benefit us; but when one considers, on the one hand, the curious idiosyncrasy of human nature, and on the other, the infinite ways there are to live and indulge oneself, it is unquestionably a miracle that the human race has not long since gone to wrack and ruin. Human nature seems to possess a peculiar kind of toughness and adaptability, since it overcomes whatever it encounters or takes into itself, and if these cannot be assimilated, at least they are neutralized. To be sure, in instances of great excess it has to surrender to the elements in spite of all resistance, as is clear where many endemic illnesses and the effects of brandy are concerned. If we could, without becoming over-careful, observe what affects us favorably or unfavorably in our complex civil and social lives, and if we would abstain, because of their bad effects on us, from consuming some things we really enjoy, then we would easily be able to remove many discomforts which, if we have an otherwise healthy constitution, often trouble us more than sickness itself. Unfortunately, it is the same in dietetic matters as in moral ones: we cannot see an error until we are

rid of it, whereby nothing is gained. For the next error does not resemble the previous one and therefore cannot be recognized for what it is.

While I was reading through the letters from Leipzig that had been sent to my sister, I could not avoid noticing, among other things, that I had considered myself very wise and clever after I had received my initial university instruction. As soon as I had learned something I played professor and immediately grew didactic. I was much amused to see how I had at once relayed to my sister whatever Gellert had taught or recommended in his lectures, without realizing the fact that in both life and reading, what is suitable for a young man may not be appropriate for a young woman. The two of us made fun of my mimicry. The poems that I had composed in Leipzig were now also too worthless for me. They seemed cold and dry, and much too superficial to be able to express conditions of the human heart or spirit. This motivated me, since I was about to forsake the paternal roof again and attend a second university, to condemn my works to another great *auto-da-fé*. Several fragments of plays, some of them going as far as the third or fourth act, others with only a complete exposition, and many other poems, letters, and papers were consigned to the flames, and almost the only things spared were Behrisch's manuscript, *The Moody Lover*, and *The Accomplices*. I was still constantly making improvements on this last work, with special fondness, and, although the play was already finished, I revised the exposition once more, to make it both livelier and clearer. In the first two acts of *Minna* Lessing had set up an unattainable standard for dramatic exposition, and nothing was of greater concern to me than to penetrate into his thought and intentions.

To be sure, my account of what affected, excited, and occupied me in these days is already detailed enough, but nevertheless I must return again to my interest in metaphysical things, which I undertook to comprehend once and for all, insofar as this was possible.

In doing so I was greatly influenced by an important book which fell into my hands, Arnold's *History of Heresy in the Church*.¹³⁸ This man was not merely a recording historian, but also was both pious and sensitive. His sentiments were very much in agreement with mine, and what especially delighted me about his book was that I received a more favorable impression of many heretics who had been presented to me previously as mad or godless. The spirit of contradiction and the taste for paradox are latent in us all. I diligently studied the various opinions, and since I had quite often heard it said that in the last analysis every person has his own religion, nothing seemed more natural to me than to form my own too, and this I did with much satisfaction. Neo-Platonism was its basis; Hermetism, mysticism, and cabalism also contributed something, and so I built myself a very strange-looking world.

I was fully minded to posit a deity that reproduces itself, by itself,

from eternity. Since, however, reproduction cannot possibly be imagined without diversity, the only immediate result could be the appearance of a second entity, which we acknowledge under the name of the Son. These two had to continue the act of reproduction and they reappeared to themselves in the third entity, which was just as consistently alive and eternal as the others. That closed the circle of divinity, however, and even they themselves could not have produced another entity altogether equal to themselves. Since the urge to reproduce nevertheless constantly went on, they created a fourth entity, but it contained an inner contradiction, for while it was absolute, like them, at the same time it was to be kept within them and delimited by them. This, now, was Lucifer, to whom from now on the whole creative power was transferred, and from whom all other essence was to proceed. He immediately gave evidence of his infinite energy by creating the angels, all of them in his likeness, absolute, but kept within him and delimited by him. Surrounded by so much glory, he forgot that his origin was in a higher source and thought it was to be found in himself, and from this first ingratitude arose all those actions of his which do not seem to us to agree with the thought and intentions of the deity. The more he concentrated into himself, the more uncomfortable he felt, of course, and so did all the other spirits, whose sweet elevation to their origin he curtailed. And so came to pass what we know as the rebellion of the angels. A group of them formed a concentrate with Lucifer, the rest reverted to their origin. From this concentration of the whole universe (for it had proceeded from Lucifer and had to follow him) there now arose everything that we perceive in the form of matter. We imagine it as being heavy, firm, and opaque, but since it derives by descent, if not with total immediacy, from the divine essence, it is just as absolutely powerful and eternal as its father and grandparents. Since all the mischief, if we may call it that, was purely the result of Lucifer's unilateral actions, this universe of course lacked its better half. For while it possessed everything that is gained through concentration, it lacked everything that can be accomplished by expansion, and so the entire universe could have destroyed itself by perpetual concentration, have annihilated itself along with its father Lucifer, and have forfeited its claim to equal eternity with the deity. The Elohim watched this situation for a while, and they had the choice either to wait for eons until the field was clear again and space left for a new universe, or to intervene in the existing condition and repair the defect according to their infinite nature. They decided on the latter, and through their will alone they made up in a moment's time for the whole defect that marred the success of Lucifer's enterprise. They gave the infinite essence the capacity of expanding, of moving toward the deity. The real pulse of life was restored again, and Lucifer himself could not escape its influence. This is the epoch

when the thing we know as light emerged, and when the process began that we customarily designate with the word "creation." Although this by degrees became more multifarious, thanks to the ever-active life energy of the Elohim, what was still missing was a being qualified to restore the original connection with the deity; and so man was brought forth. He was supposed to be like, indeed equal to the deity in everything, but because of that naturally found himself in the same situation as Lucifer, that is, simultaneously absolute and limited. And since this contradiction would be manifested by him in all the categories of existence, and his condition would be complicated by his perfect consciousness and resolute will, it was foreseeable that he would necessarily become at once the most perfect and the most imperfect, the happiest and the unhappiest of creatures. Before long, he was also playing Lucifer's role entirely. Ingratitude really implies a separation from one's benefactor, and so rebellion loomed for the second time; nevertheless, the whole creation is nothing and was nothing but a rebelling against and returning to the original source.

It is easy to see here how redemption was not only decided on in eternity but is also conceived of as being eternally necessary, indeed it must always be renewed through the whole period of becoming and being. When viewed from this perspective, nothing is more natural than that the deity itself should assume the form of man, which it had already prepared as a cloak for itself, and that it should share man's destiny for a while, and by means of this similitude enhance his joys and soothe his sorrows. The history of all religions and philosophies teaches us how this great truth, which is indispensable to human beings, has been passed down by various nations at various times in manifold ways, often in curious fables and images suitable for people of limited intelligence. It suffices if we will just recognize that our condition, even though seeming to drag us down and oppress us, is such that we are still left with the opportunity, nay, the duty of raising ourselves up and fulfilling the plans of the deity. This is what we do when, while compelled on the one hand to concentrate into ourselves, we do not neglect, on the other hand, to expand, in regular pulsations, away from ourselves.

Book Nine

“Furthermore, the heart is frequently stirred in behalf of various virtues, especially those of a sociable, polite kind, and its tenderer feelings are aroused and developed. The young reader will be especially impressed by many features that give an insight into the secret corners of the human heart and its emotions, knowledge which is more valuable than any amount of Greek and Latin; and Ovid was certainly a past master in it. But this is still not the real reason why the ancient poets, including Ovid, are put into young people’s hands. The kindly Creator has given us a great many mental powers whose proper cultivation must not be neglected, even in the earliest years, and this cannot be done either with logic or metaphysics, with Latin or Greek. We have the power of imagination, and if it is not to proceed on its own, seizing upon whatever notions it can, we must present it with the most suitable and beautiful images and thereby accustom and train the mind to recognize and love beauty everywhere, also in nature itself, in its clear, true aspects, but in the subtler ones as well. We need a great many concepts and pieces of general information that are not to be learned from any compendium. Our perceptions, our inclinations, and our emotions must be developed to advantage and purified.”

This significant passage, which appeared in the *Universal German Library*, was not the only one of its kind. Similar principles and like sentiments were proclaimed in a good many quarters. They impressed us energetic young men very greatly, and had all the more decisive an effect since they were bolstered by Wieland’s example. The works of his brilliant second period¹³⁹ were clear proof that his cultural development had been along the lines of such maxims. And how could we ask for anything more? Philosophy and its abstruse demands were put aside; we saw the ancient languages, the learning of which involves so much difficulty, pushed into the background; the compendia, about whose adequacy Hamlet had already whispered a word of doubt into our ears, seemed ever more suspect; we were advised to observe active life, which we were so gladly living, and to gain knowledge of the emotions we partly felt, partly suspected, in our bosoms. We formerly had been rebuked for these, but from now on they could only be viewed as something important and worthy. They were to be the chief object of our study, and knowledge of them was highly recommended to us as the very best means of cultivating our intellectual powers. Besides, this way of thinking conformed completely with my own convictions, indeed with my whole way of writing poetry. Therefore, after having seen so many a good plan frustrated and so many a sincere hope vanish,

I went along passively with my father's idea of sending me to Strassburg, where I was promised a cheerful, merry life but was also expected to continue my studies and finally take my degree.

In the spring I not only felt my health restored, but even more so my youthful confidence, and I longed to depart a second time from the paternal roof, although for reasons quite different from the first time. These pretty rooms and interiors, where I had suffered so much, had become distasteful to me, and I was unable to establish any pleasant relationship with my father himself. I could not quite forgive him for having betrayed undue impatience during the recurrences of my illness and the long convalescence; indeed, instead of comforting me with his forbearance, he often made cruel remarks about something that is beyond all human control as though it were simply a question of willpower. But he was wounded and offended by me in many ways too.

Young men bring back general concepts from the university, and, to be sure, that is as it should be; but because they are wise in their own conceit, they apply these standards to whatever objects present themselves, usually to the detriment thereof. Thus I had acquired a general notion about the architecture, arrangement, and decoration of houses, and while conversing I incautiously applied this to our own house. My father had devised its whole plan and had carried out its construction with great perseverance, and as a dwelling intended exclusively for himself and his family it was quite above reproach; and a great many houses in Frankfurt were built in the same fashion. The open staircase descended through broad corridors, which were like rooms themselves, and we always used them as such during the warm season. But what was a pleasant and cheerful arrangement for a single family—this communication between upstairs and downstairs—became the greatest inconvenience when several sets of people inhabited the house, as we had learned to our sorrow during the billeting of the French. That alarming scene with the king's lieutenant would never have taken place, indeed my father would have been less conscious of all the nuisance, if our staircase had been placed, in Leipzig fashion, against one side and provided with a locked door to every floor. Once I warmly praised that way of building and explained the advantages of it; I showed my father how it would be possible to shift his staircase also, whereupon he flew into an incredible rage, one that was all the more violent since shortly before I had criticized some ornate mirror frames and spurned certain Chinese wallpapers. A scene ensued which, although hushed and smoothed over, definitely hastened the date of my journey to beautiful Alsace, which I completed without stopovers, in a short time, in the comfortable, newly established express stagecoach.

I stopped at the inn called "The Spirit" and hurried off immediately to satisfy my dearest desire, which was to get nearer to the cathedral. My fellow travelers had pointed it out to me long before and it had held

my gaze for some distances. Now, when I perceived this colossus, first through the narrow lane and then standing almost too close to it on the really very narrow square, it made a quite unique impression on me, which I was not immediately able to explain but for the moment just vaguely kept with me as I hastily climbed up higher in the building. I did not want to miss this beautiful moment when a bright, high sun would reveal the whole broad, rich land to me at once.

And so from the platform I saw before me the beautiful region in which I would be permitted to live and lodge for a while: the goodly town, the extensive surrounding meadows densely studded and interwoven with splendid trees, the extraordinary lushness of the vegetation marking the shores, islands, and bottom lands along the course of the Rhine. No less beautifully dressed in various shades of green is the flat land to the south, which is watered by the Iller. Also toward the mountains on the west there are many plains which afford an equally charming view of forest and meadowland; and the hillier northern section is traversed by innumerable little brooks that promote quick growth everywhere. Between these opulently outspread meadows and pleasingly distributed groves one must imagine all the arable land admirably cultivated, greening, and ripening, the best and richest parts of it indicated by villages and farmsteads, and this immense expanse, like a new paradise richly prepared for mankind, bounded both closely and in the distance by hills partly cultivated and partly forested—then it will be understood why I delightedly blessed my destiny for having ordained this beautiful place as my dwelling for some time to come.

This kind of initial look into a new land where we are to sojourn for a while also has the special quality, both pleasant and ominous, of spreading out the whole area before us like a blank page. It has not yet been marked by any sorrows or joys pertaining to us. This bright, many-hued, lively expanse is still mute for us; objects attract our eye only if they are intrinsically significant, and as yet neither affection nor emotion makes this or that spot stand out. But the young heart is already disquieted by a premonition of what is to come, and secretly feels an unsatisfied need to seek whatever will and may happen, for weal or woe. At all events, it will subtly assume the character of the region in which we find ourselves.

Having descended from the heights, I lingered a little longer before the façade of the venerable building. But what I could not quite grasp, either the first time or for a while afterwards, was that I would have perceived this marvel as something monstrous and terrifying, had it not at the same time seemed comprehensible in its disciplined order and even pleasant in its planful execution. However, my mind was by no means occupied by reflections on this contradiction, but let the astonishing monument continue to affect me quietly by its presence.

I moved into small, but pleasant and conveniently located quarters on the south side of the Fish Market, a fine, long street whose constant activity was distraction for any idle moment. Then I delivered my letters of recommendation and found among my patrons a merchant who, with his family, adhered to those pietistic sentiments I knew so well, although he had not separated from the church with regard to outward worship. He was a sensible man for all that, and did not put on a long face in daily life. The dining club which had been recommended to me (as I to it) was very pleasant and amusing. A couple of spinsters had been running this pension in an orderly and successful fashion for a long time, and it was made up of about ten persons, some older and some younger. Of the latter, the one I still recall most distinctly was a native of Lindau named Meyer.¹⁴⁰ He could have been considered a most handsome man, both in face and figure, if there had not been something slovenly in his whole bearing. Likewise, his brilliant natural gifts were spoiled by his incredible frivolity, and his delightful disposition by his unruly, dissolute way of life. He had an open, happy face, more round than oval in shape; the sensory organs—eyes, nose, mouth, and ears—could be called ample, and they showed a decided fullness without being exaggeratedly large. The mouth was especially charming with its overshot upper lip, and his whole physiognomy was given a unique expression by the fact he was a monobrow, that is to say, his eyebrows were joined over his nose, which always gives a handsome face a pleasantly sensuous look. His joviality, sincerity, and good nature made him universally popular. He had a prodigious memory, and attentiveness during lectures was no effort for him: he retained everything he heard, and his inquiring mind took an interest in everything, which was all the easier since he was studying medicine. All his impressions stayed very distinct, and he took a mischievous delight in repeating the lectures and aping the professors. This sometimes went so far that, when he had attended three different classes in the morning, in the afternoon at table he would alternate the professors, paragraph by paragraph, indeed sometimes still more disconnectedly; and while this motley lecturing often entertained us, it also often grew tiresome.

The others, in varying degree, were refined, sedate, serious men. Among them was a retired knight of the Order of St. Louis,¹⁴¹ but the majority were students, all really kind and well-disposed to each other, providing they did not exceed their customary allotment of wine. Our president, one Doctor Salzmann,¹⁴² was much concerned to keep this from happening easily. A bachelor already in his sixties, he had been coming to this noonday table for many years and had kept it in order and good repute. He possessed a goodly fortune. In appearance he was always neat and tidy, indeed he was one of those people who always go out in shoes and stockings, with a hat held under their arm. It was

a highly unusual action for him to put his hat on his head. He customarily carried an umbrella, being ever mindful that even on the finest summer days storms and showers may descend on the land.

It was with this man that I discussed my intention of continuing my legal studies here in Strassburg and taking my degree as soon as possible. Since he was precisely informed about everything, I questioned him about the courses I would have to take and his general opinion on the matter. Thereupon he replied that the situation in Strassburg was different from the one in German universities, where the idea was to turn out lawyers in the broad and scholarly sense of the word. Here, in keeping with the close relationship to France, the whole emphasis was really on practical matters, and the approach was in the manner of the French, who like to stick with the facts. An attempt was made to teach every student certain general principles and certain fundamentals, but this was kept as brief as possible and only the most necessary knowledge was transmitted. Then he introduced me to a man whose ability to coach had won everyone's confidence, as it soon did mine too. As a preamble, I began talking to him on legal subjects, and he was more than a little amazed by my swaggering. During my Leipzig sojourn I had gained more insight into the subject of law than I chose to describe in my earlier narration; but my whole accumulation could only pass for a general, encyclopedic survey, not for genuine, exact knowledge. Even if we cannot boast of having been really industrious in our university life, it still bestows infinite advantages for every kind of development, because we are always surrounded by people who either possess or are pursuing knowledge, and we always draw some nourishment from such an atmosphere, even if unconsciously.

My tutor, after having been patient with my rambling discourse for some time, finally made me understand that I had, above all, to keep my eye on my nearest objectives, namely my examination, the taking of my degree, and then, possibly, my entry into practice. "Let us concentrate on the first of these," he said. "The matter will by no means be treated in depth. They will not inquire about where and how a law originated and what was the internal or external cause of it; they will not investigate how it has changed through time and custom, nor how it may even have been inverted by false interpretation or improper court usage. Learned men literally spend their whole lives in such research; we, however, inquire about the present formulation and imprint it firmly on our memory, so that it is always in mind when we want to use it for the benefit and protection of our clients. So we equip our young men for actual life, and the rest will follow insofar as they have the talents and energy." Hereupon he handed me his notebooks, which were arranged in question-and-answer form. I could let myself be examined from them fairly well at once, because I still remembered per-

fectly Hoppe's little legal catechism; with a bit of effort I was able to make up for any deficiencies, and so, against my will, I qualified myself as a degree candidate by the easiest route.

Since, however, this method of study left me no room for my own participation (for I had no taste for anything absolute, preferring to have everything explained to me, if not rationally, then historically), I found a means of giving my energies a wider scope, and used this in the strangest way, namely by yielding to an interest that came to me coincidentally, from outside.

Most of my table companions were medical students. It is well known that they are the only ones who converse animatedly about their science, their profession, even outside of class hours. This is due to the nature of the thing. The object of their studies is that which is at once the most physical and the most sublime, the simplest and the most complicated. Medicine preoccupies the whole person because it is preoccupied with the whole person. Everything the young student learns has immediate bearing on some important practical use, which is certainly fraught with peril, but is in many senses rewarding. Therefore he passionately applies himself to whatever is to be known and done, partly because it interests him by itself, and partly because it opens up for him the happy prospect of independence and prosperity.

Thus at table I heard nothing but medical conversation, just as I had formerly at Aulic Councilor Ludwig's pension. Little else was talked about on our walks and outings either, since my table mates, being good fellows, had also become my companions the rest of the time, and they were always joined from all sides by persons of like mind and pursuing like studies. The school of medicine in general outshone the others, both with respect to the renown of the teachers and the numbers of students, and so I was pulled along by the current, something which happened all the more easily since I had just enough knowledge of these things to spark and heighten my desire to learn more. Therefore at the beginning of the second semester I attended Spielmann's¹⁴³ lectures on chemistry and Lobstein's¹⁴⁴ on anatomy, and I resolved to be very diligent because I had already won some prestige and reputation in our group on account of my strange rudimentary or, rather, superficial knowledge.

But as if this were not enough to distract me from my studies and interrupt them, something else occurred to disturb them significantly. A noteworthy state event caused a great stir and provided us with a fair series of holidays. Marie Antoinette, Archduchess of Austria and Queen of France, was to come through Strassburg on her way to Paris. The ceremonies which impress upon the populace that there are important personages in the world were busily and lavishly prepared, and what especially attracted me was the building erected between the two

bridges on an island in the Rhine, where she was to be received and transferred into the hands of her husband's emissaries. It was raised above the ground only slightly, and had a large middle room, with smaller ones on both sides; then other rooms followed, extending somewhat farther to the rear. In a word, if it had been constructed more permanently it would have been very suitable as a summer house for persons of high rank. What particularly interested me and led me to part with many a *Büsel* (a small silver coin then current), so that the gatekeeper would let me in repeatedly, was the woven tapestries which lined the whole interior. Here for the first time I saw an example of those wall hangings woven after Raphael's designs, and this sight had a most decided effect on me, for I became acquainted, though only in a copy, with the correct and perfect use of massive proportions. I went and came and came and went, and could not get my fill of these tapestries; indeed I was tormented because I strove in vain to comprehend the extraordinary appeal they had for me. But while I found the side rooms most pleasant and uplifting, the main room was altogether frightful. It had been hung with tapestries worked after paintings by French artists, and they were much larger, glossier, richer, and surrounded by clustered ornamentation.

Probably I would have become reconciled to this style too, because my feelings and judgment were not prone to exclude very many things totally. But the subject matter thoroughly outraged me. These pictures contained the story of Jason, Medea, and Creusa, in other words, an example of most unhappy nuptials. At the left of the throne one saw the bride in the throes of the cruelest sort of death, surrounded by lamenting onlookers; at the right the father stood horrified by the murdered children at his feet, and meanwhile the Fury herself was ascending in her dragon-drawn chariot. And on the right hand (to add absurdity to this cruelty and loathsomeness), from behind the red velvet and gold-embroidered throne-back there came curling forth the white tail of the magic bull, while the fire-breathing beast itself and Jason, who was battling it, were completely concealed by that costly drapery.

At this point all the maxims I had ingested in Oeser's school stirred in my bosom. To have put Christ and the apostles in the side rooms of a wedding pavilion showed, in itself, a lack of discretion and discernment, and doubtlessly the keeper of the royal tapestries had only had his mind on the dimensions of the rooms. But I gladly excused that since it worked so greatly to my advantage. On the other hand, a lapse like that in the large room quite made me lose my composure, and I excitedly and vehemently called upon my companions to bear witness to this crime against taste and feeling.—“What!” I exclaimed, taking no notice of the people standing round about. “Is it permissible to be so inconsiderate as to confront a young queen, just when she first sets

foot into her country, with the example of what is perhaps the most ghastly wedding that has ever been celebrated? Is there not one French architect, decorator, or tapestry hanger who realizes that pictures depict something, that pictures have an effect on sense and feeling, that they make impressions, that they arouse presentiments? It is just as if one had sent the most atrocious spectre to meet this beautiful and, it is said, light-hearted lady at the frontier." I do not know what else I said, but my companions tried to pacify me and get me away from the place before there was trouble. Then they assured me that not everyone was prone to look for meaning in pictures; they at least had had no thoughts about them, and neither the whole population of Strassburg and the surrounding territory, however they might stream in, nor the queen herself with her court would ever seize upon such melancholy fancies.

This young lady's mien, beautiful and aristocratic, both cheerful and imposing, is still clear in my memory. In her glass coach, perfectly visible to us all, she was conversing familiarly with her female companions and seemed to be joking about the crowds streaming toward her procession. In the evening, we walked through the streets to see the various illuminated buildings, and especially the fiery pinnacle of the cathedral, which was an endless feast for the eyes, both nearby and from afar.

The queen continued on her way, the country folk dispersed, and soon the town was as quiet as before. Before the queen's arrival, the entirely reasonable order had been given that no deformed persons, or cripples, or people with repulsive diseases were to show themselves along her route. Jokes were made about this, and I wrote a little French poem in which I drew a comparison between the coming of Christ, who seemed to have trod the earth for the particular sake of the sick and the lame, and the coming of the queen, which banished these unfortunates. My friends considered it passable, but a Frenchman who was living with us criticized its language and meter mercilessly and it would seem, only too soundly, for I do not remember ever again having written a French poem.

Hardly had the news of the queen's happy arrival in the capital rung out when some dreadful tidings followed: at the festive fireworks there, through a police oversight, an immense number of people, along with their horses and carriages, had perished in a street blocked off by building materials, and during the wedding festivities the city had been plunged into grief and sorrow. An attempt was made to hide the extent of the misfortune both from the young royal couple and the world by having the victims buried secretly, with the result that many families did not realize their relatives also had been carried off by this terrible event until the latter never returned home again. I hardly need mention that at this juncture those grisly pictures in the main salon came to my

mind again, for everyone knows how strong certain moral impressions can be when they assume flesh and blood, as it were, in physical ones.

However, on account of a prank I indulged in, this happening was also to frighten and distress my family. We young men who had been in Leipzig together retained even afterwards a certain propensity for pulling each other's leg and alternately playing hoaxes. Out of such wicked love for mischief I wrote a letter to a friend in Frankfurt (it was the same one who had amplified my poem to Hendel the pastrycook, applied it to *Medon*, and then given it general distribution) and indicated it was being sent from Versailles. I reported to him my safe arrival there, my participation in the festivities, and so on, but also enjoined the strictest silence on him. I must add that our little Leipzig coterie had gotten into the habit, ever since he had played that trick which made so much trouble for us, of persecuting him with hoaxes from time to time, and did it all the more often because he was the drollest person in the world and never more amiable than when he discovered the error into which he had purposely been led. Shortly after writing this letter I went on a little trip and was absent for a fortnight. Meanwhile Frankfurt had received news of the accident. My friend believed me to be in Paris, and worried, out of fondness for me, that I might be involved in it. He inquired of my parents, and of other persons to whom I usually wrote, whether any letters had arrived, but just then my trip prevented me from dispatching any, and so they were nowhere to be found. He went about in great anxiety, and finally confessed the reason to our closest friends, who now became equally concerned. Fortunately, their speculations did not reach my parents' ears before a letter had arrived announcing my return to Strassburg. My young friends were happy to know I was alive but remained quite convinced I had been in Paris in the meantime. Their heartwarming accounts of the concern they had felt on my account touched me so deeply that I forswore all such pranks forever, but unfortunately I was again guilty of similar things later on. Real life can often lose its luster very badly and needs to be refurbished from time to time with the varnish of fiction.

The mighty stream of courtly pomp had now flowed past, leaving me with no regrets except that I longed for those Raphaelic tapestries, which I would have gladly viewed, venerated, and worshipped every hour of the day. Fortunately, through passionate effort I was successful in making several persons of importance interested in them, and therefore it was only at the last possible moment that they were taken down and packed up. Then we returned to our quiet, leisurely pace of university and social life, and Registrar Salzmann, our table president, was our general mentor for the latter of these. The whole group liked and esteemed him for his understanding, his indulgence, and his dignity, which he knew how to preserve in spite of all the banter and even the

minor debaucheries which he sometimes permitted us. I can think of only a few instances when he showed serious displeasure or used his authority to settle little quarrels and arguments. Of us all, I was the one who associated with him the most, and he was no less inclined to converse with me, because he found me more broadly cultivated and less biased in my judgments than the others. Also, I modelled myself on him in external matters, so that he was not embarrassed to present me in public as his comrade and companion. Although his office seemed to be one of minor influence, he nevertheless administered it in a fashion that did him the greatest honor. He was registrar of the Orphan Commission and of course was really the man in charge there, like the perpetual secretary of a university. Since he had attended to these affairs very meticulously for many years, there was not a family, from the most to the least prominent, that did not owe him a debt of gratitude. After all, there is hardly anyone in the whole state administration who can harvest more blessings or curses than he who takes care of orphans or who wastes their possessions or lets them be wasted.

The Strassburgers are passionately fond of walking, and they have every right to be. Turn one's steps where one will, there are pleasure spots to be found, some natural, some artificially laid out in old or modern times, but all of them visited and enjoyed by cheerful, merry little groups of people. What made the sight of great masses of strollers more delightful here than in other towns, however, was the varied garb of the female sex. The middle-class town girls still retained their braids, wound up and fastened tight with a big pin, and also a certain close-fitting style of dress, with which any sort of train would have been inappropriate. And the pleasant thing about it was that this attire did not make a sharp distinction between the classes, for there were still a few wealthy, aristocratic families that would not allow their daughters to relinquish this costume. The others dressed in the French style, and this set made several proselytes every year. Salzmann had a wide acquaintanceship and universal entrée—a great convenience for the person accompanying him, especially in summer, because one found a good reception, good company, and recreation in all the gardens near and far, and also frequently received invitations for this or that enjoyable day. In one such case I had occasion to find my way very quickly into the good graces of a family I was visiting only for the second time. We were invited and appeared at the designated hour. The company was not large; some were playing cards, and some were, as usual, strolling. Later, when we were called to the table, I saw the hostess and her sister talking agitatedly to each other, as though in great embarrassment. When I came near them I said, "Of course, ladies, I have no right to intrude into your secrets. But perhaps I can give you some good advice or even be of service to you." Hereupon they revealed their painful

situation, namely that they had asked twelve persons to dine, and just now a relative had returned from a trip, who as the thirteenth at the table would be an awkward *memento mori*, if not to himself, at any rate to some of the guests.—“The matter is very easily remedied,” I replied. “Permit me to withdraw and retain my right to a future recompense.” Since they were well-mannered persons of good social status, they would not hear of this, but instead sent around in the neighborhood to locate a fourteenth. I submitted to their doing that, but when I saw the servant enter by the garden gate, not having succeeded, I slipped away and spent a pleasant evening under the old linden trees of Bug Mead. It was surely only natural that I was handsomely repaid for this self-denial.

A sort of general sociability cannot be imagined anymore without card playing. Salzmann renewed Madame Böhme’s good teachings, and I was more obedient than before, having really come to understand that by making this small sacrifice, if that is what it actually was, one could attain many a pleasure in society, and indeed even a greater freedom than one would otherwise have enjoyed. My dormant old piquet was therefore exhumed, I learned whist, followed my mentor’s directions about equipping myself with a gambling purse, which was to remain intact under all circumstances, and now there was occasion to spend most of my evenings with my friend in the best circles. Here the people were on the whole well disposed to me and forgave the little irregularities that my friend very gently called to my attention.

So that I might meanwhile learn symbolically to what extent one must conform to society and follow its dictates even in external matters, I was compelled to do something that seemed to me as disagreeable as could be. Although I had a very fine head of hair, my Strassburg barber at once informed me that it was cut much too short in back and he could not possibly arrange it in a style that would be presentable, because only a few short, curled hairs were permitted in front and all the rest had to be pulled back from the crown of the head and tied together in a pigtail or hairbag. I had no choice, accordingly, but to accept a hairpiece until the natural growth was again sufficient to meet the demands of the time. At first I made strenuous objections, but he promised me that no one would ever notice the innocent deception if I would resolve on it immediately. He kept his word, and I was always considered a very well-coiffed and tressed young man. Since, however, I had to remain thus dandified and powdered from early morning onwards, always taking care not to betray my false adornment by getting heated and making violent movements, the restraint actually contributed a great deal, for a while, to the calming and improving of my behavior. I grew accustomed to going about with my hat under my arm, and therefore also in shoes and stockings; but I could not omit to wear thin

leather understockings to protect myself against the Rhine gnats which infest the meadows and gardens on fine summer evenings. Vigorous physical movement may have been denied me under these circumstances, but our social conversations kept becoming ever more animated and enthusiastic, indeed they were the most interesting ones I had had up to this time.

My way of thinking and feeling was such that I was quite satisfied to accept every person for what he was or even just claimed to be, and my fresh, open, youthful spirit, which now came into full blossom almost for the first time, made me a great many friends and satellites. Our dining club grew to some twenty persons, but because our good Salzmann persisted in his traditional methods, everything continued in the old way, and the conversation became, if anything, still seemlier, since every individual had to consider the feelings of several others. Among the new arrivals was a man who especially interested me: his name was Jung,¹⁴⁵ the very same person who afterwards became well known under the name Stilling. In spite of his antiquated style of dress and a certain coarseness, there was a delicate quality to his figure. His bagwig did not mar his pleasant, distinguished face. His voice was gentle, without being soft or weak; indeed, when he grew heated, which happened very easily, it became strong and sonorous. On better acquaintance, one found he had healthy common sense, which was ingrained in his temperament and so could be moved by affection and emotions; and from this same temperament there arose, with utmost purity, enthusiasm for what is good, true, and just. This man's way of life had been very simple and yet crowded with events and manifold activities. The wellspring of his energy was an unshakable faith in God and in the help emanating directly from Him, which manifested itself in uninterrupted providence and unfailing rescue out of all distress and every evil. Jung had had so many experiences of the kind in his life and they had been repeated so often, even recently in Strassburg, that with great joyfulness he led a life that was free from care, though very modest, and could attend very seriously to his studies, although he could not count on any secure income from one quarter year to the next. In his childhood, while on the way to becoming a charcoal-burner, he took up the tailoring trade and, after he had taught himself on the side about things of a higher nature, his pedagogical instincts led him to take a position as a schoolmaster. This experiment failed, and he returned to his trade, from which, however, because he easily won everyone's affection and confidence, he was repeatedly called away to take over the position of private tutor. But he owed his most genuine and profound cultural development to that widespread human class which sought salvation on its own and, while trying to edify itself through reading the Scriptures and moralistic books, and by mutual

admonition and confession, attained to a degree of culture which commanded admiration. The ardor that never forsook them and which enlivened their social gatherings rested on the simplest foundations of morality, benevolence, and beneficence; moreover the transgressions that can crop up among people living in such restricted situations are of such slight significance that they mostly had clear consciences and were cheerful of spirit; consequently what emerged was not an artificial but a truly natural culture, which had the further advantage of being suitable for all ages and classes and universally sociable in nature. So these people, within their own circle, were really eloquent and capable of expressing themselves appropriately and agreeably about whatever heartfelt concerns they had, however tender or forceful. Our good Jung was like that. In small gatherings, among people not necessarily in total agreement with him but at least not expressly opposed to his way of thinking, he was found to be not just talkative, but eloquent. Especially, he related his life story most delightfully, and could make his hearers visualize all the situations distinctly and vividly. I urged him to write these things down, and he promised to do so. However, because he was like a sleepwalker in his manner of expressing himself, to whom one may not call for fear of making him fall from a height, or like a gentle stream that grows turbulent if obstructed, he could not help feeling uncomfortable in larger groups. His faith tolerated no doubt and his conviction no mockery. And, inexhaustible as he was in his friendly narrating, it would all stop short if he met contradiction. At such junctures I usually helped him along, and he rewarded me with his sincere affection. His attitudes were not at all strange to me; on the contrary I had become quite familiar with them in my best male and female friends, and their naturalness and naiveté had considerable appeal for me too. Therefore he could definitely feel very much at ease with me. I liked the trend of his thought, and I did not tamper with his faith in miracles, which served him so well. Salzmann treated him with forbearance also; I say forbearance because Salzmann, by character, nature, age, and situation, could not help being and remaining on the side of the rational, or rather, reasonable Christians, whose religion was essentially a matter of upright character and manly self-reliance, and who therefore did not like to bother and meddle with feelings that might easily lead them into gloomy fanaticism and then obscurity. This class, also, was numerous and respectable. All these honest, capable people understood each other and shared not only the same convictions but the same mode of life.

Lerse,¹⁴⁶ another of our table companions, was also of this number, and was a perfectly upright young man with but few earthly possessions, so that he had to be careful and frugal. His manner of keeping house and of living was, of all the students I have known, the most penurious.

He was the cleanest of us all in his attire, and yet he always appeared in the same clothes. But of course he treated his wardrobe most carefully, and he kept his room very tidy; also, he demanded that everything in everyday life conform to his example. It just never happened that he would lean against something or prop his elbow on the table. He never forgot to mark his napkin, and the maid would always come in for a scolding if the chairs were not found spotlessly clean. With all of this, there was nothing stiff in his manner. He spoke guilelessly, resolutely, with a dry briskness, and his lightly ironical way of jesting suited him very well. In figure he was well formed, slim, and fairly tall; his face was pock-marked and unprepossessing, but his small blue eyes were cheerful and penetrating. Since he had cause to be our tutor in so many other ways, we also let him act as our fencing master. He handled the rapier very well, and it apparently amused him to take this as an opportunity for inflicting all the profession's pedantry on us. We really profited from his instruction too, and were obliged to him for many a sociable hour spent in good physical activity and practice under his tutelage.

All these characteristics fully qualified Lerse for the post of judge and arbitrator in all the lesser and greater quarrels that arose (albeit seldom) in our circle, if Salzmann could not allay them in his paternal way. We did not have the outward forms that cause so much trouble at universities, but we still, because of the circumstances and our good will, represented a closed society, with which many another person might come into casual contact, but could not intrude himself upon. Lerse always showed the greatest impartiality in his arbitration of internal disputes; and if the quarrel could not be settled with words and explanations, he knew how to steer the obligatory satisfaction into harmless directions honorably. No one was more skilled in this than he, and he often used to say that, since Heaven had not destined him to be a hero in either love or war, he would be content with the second's role, both in romance and in duels. Since he remained absolutely true to himself and could be viewed as a real model of good and constant character, the idea of him imprinted itself both deeply and favorably on my mind; and when I wrote *Götz von Berlichingen* I felt it would be an occasion for erecting a monument to our friendship: so I gave the name Lerse to the doughty figure who knows how to be subordinate in such a dignified way.

He was always reminding us, with unfailing dry humor, of our obligations to ourselves and others, and how one must manage if one is to live in peace as long as possible, and that to this end one must be on one's guard against people. But I had quite different situations and opponents to deal with, both within and without, for I was locked in combat with myself, with objects, nay, with the elements. I found myself

in a state of health that would adequately support me in anything I was supposed to or wanted to undertake, but I was still left with a certain hypersensitivity, and so did not always keep my equilibrium. I detested loud noises, and morbid objects aroused my disgust and horror. But I was especially uneasy about the dizziness that always attacked me when I looked down from a height. I tried to remedy all these defects and, since I did not want to waste any time, actually in somewhat impetuous ways. In the evening, while the tattoo was being sounded, I walked along next to the many drums, whose violent roll and beat came close to bursting the heart in my bosom. All alone, I climbed up to the highest part of the cathedral tower and sat in its so-called "neck," under the knop or "crown," as it is named, for a good quarter of an hour, until I dared to go back out in the open air and stand on a platform that is hardly a yard square and has hardly any handhold. From there one sees the infinite landscape before one's eyes, while the ornaments and other things round about hide the church and everything upon and above which one is standing. It is exactly as if one were aloft in a Montgolfier balloon. I exposed myself to similar fears and torments often enough so that I became quite indifferent to the impression they made, and since then, these preliminary exercises have been a great advantage to me on mountain trips and in geological studies, on large construction sites where I competed with the carpenters in running over ledges and exposed beams, and even in Rome, where one must engage in just such exploits to get a closer look at some significant art works. Anatomy was also doubly valuable to me, because it taught me to bear the most repulsive sights while it satisfied my thirst for knowledge. And so I also attended the elder Doctor Ehrmann's¹⁴⁷ clinical course, as well as his son's¹⁴⁸ course in obstetrics, with the dual intention of acquainting myself with all conditions and of liberating myself from all apprehensiveness about repulsive things. I really made so much progress that nothing of the kind was ever able to disturb my composure. However, I sought to steel myself not only against these physical impressions but also against the assaults of fantasy. I succeeded in becoming indifferent to the eerie and uncanny impressions made by darkness, cemeteries, solitary places, churches and chapels at night, and everything of that nature; and in this, too, my progress was such that day and night and every locality were all the same to me. Indeed, when in later years I fancied that I would like to feel those pleasant youthful shivers again in such an environment, I could barely summon up any even with the weirdest and most frightful images that I evoked.

This effort to escape from the stress and pressure of the vast and all too serious thoughts that continued to dominate my mind (sometimes seeming my strength, sometimes my weakness) was materially aided by a free, sociable, active style of life, which attracted me more and

more, which I accustomed myself to, and which I finally learned to enjoy in complete freedom. Life in the world soon teaches us that a person feels freest and most completely absolved of his own frailties when he brings to mind the defects in others and smugly criticizes them at length. Even just raising ourselves above our peers by disparaging and disapproving of them is a rather agreeable feeling, and that is why good society, whether in smaller or larger groups, likes to indulge in it. But nothing can compare to the complacent smugness with which we set ourselves up as judges of our superiors and betters, our princes and statesmen, or declare public actions to be inept and inexpedient. Then we only consider the real and possible obstacles and appreciate neither the greatness of the intention nor the part which time and circumstances can be expected to play in any such enterprise.

Anyone who remembers the condition of the kingdom of France at that time, or has exact and detailed knowledge of it from later writings, can easily imagine how people in semi-French Alsace talked about the king and his ministers, and the court and its favorites. These were new items for my love of information, and ones much welcomed by my youthful impudence and egotism. I took careful note of everything and busily wrote it all down; and now from the few fragments that remain I can see that such bits of news, even though they may have been hastily pieced together from idle tales and unreliable, general rumors, still retain a certain value. Later on they make it possible to place long-delayed revelations alongside what was already public knowledge at that time, and of comparing the convictions of posterity with the correct or incorrect opinions of contemporaries.

A striking sight and one we street-idlers watched daily was the municipal beautification project, whose execution was progressing in the oddest way from outlines and plans into reality. Intendant Gayot¹⁴⁹ had resolved to redo the crooked, diverse lanes of Strassburg and to establish a beautiful, fine-looking city that would be ruled off as straight as a die. Thereupon the Parisian master builder Blondel¹⁵⁰ sketched a proposal according to which 140 property owners gained more space, 80 lost some, and the rest remained in their previous condition. This plan was approved but was not to be executed all at once; rather, it was to advance toward completion over a period of time, and meanwhile the town was in a rather strange state somewhere between form and deformity. If, for example, a winding street was to be straightened, the first enterprising person would build up to the designated line. Then perhaps his nextdoor neighbor, but maybe only the third or fourth owner away, would do the same, and the houses remaining behind would be left with forecourts of a most awkward depth because of these projections. Force was to be avoided, but without some compulsion no progress at all would have been made; and so nobody whose house had

been put under eminent domain was permitted to improve or add anything facing the street. All this curious, haphazard bungling gave us strolling idlers a most welcome opportunity to scoff and make suggestions à la Behrisch for expediting completion, while doubting the possibility of this. However, many a beautiful building that was under construction should have prompted other thoughts in us. How much progress has been made on the project during the long time that has elapsed since then, I cannot say.

Another subject that the Protestant Strassburgers liked to discuss was the expulsion of the Jesuits.¹⁵¹ No sooner had the town been ceded to the French than these fathers had made their appearance and looked for a domicile. Soon they expanded and built a splendid college. This abuts on the cathedral in such a way that a third of its façade is concealed by the rear of the church. It was planned as a complete rectangle with a garden in the center, but only three sides had been finished. It is solidly made of stone, like all the buildings of these fathers. The Society's plan included putting pressure on the Protestants, if not actually oppressing them, for it felt duty-bound to restore the old religion to the full extent. Consequently its downfall was a very great satisfaction to the opposition, which watched the fathers with no small pleasure as they sold their wines, disposed of their books, and turned over their building to another, possibly less energetic order. How people rejoice to be rid of an adversary, or even of just a keeper, and the flock does not reflect that, when the dog is gone, they are exposed to the wolves!

Every town, of course, also has to have its tragedies, which frighten generations of children; and so in Strassburg frequent mention was made of the unfortunate Praetor Klinglin,¹⁵² who, having attained earthly bliss in the highest degree, ruled over the town and land almost absolutely and enjoyed everything that wealth, rank, and influence can possibly bestow, until he finally lost courtly favor. He was called to account for everything that had previously been overlooked and, though over seventy years old, was even put in prison, where he died mysteriously.

Our table companion, the knight of St. Louis, knew how to tell this and other stories with verve and animation, which was why I gladly accompanied him on walks, unlike the others, who evaded his invitations and left me alone with him. Since with new acquaintances I usually let things proceed for a while without thinking much about them or their effect on me, I only noticed gradually that his stories and opinions were more disquieting and confusing to me than informative and enlightening. I never knew what to make of him, although the riddle could easily have been solved. He was one of the many people to whom life gives no final answers, and so they keep on expending all their efforts on details. Unfortunately, in spite of this he was decidedly, even passionately, fond of meditation, but with no skill in cogitation, and in

such people it is easy for an idea to become so ingrained that one can speak of mental illness. He kept returning to one such fixed idea, and so after a while became quite tedious. That is, he would complain bitterly about the decline of his memory, particularly in regard to the most recent events, and would assert, in line with his own reasoning, that all virtue is the product of a good memory, and all vice that of forgetfulness. He could argue this doctrine with great ingenuity, and indeed anything can be asserted if one does not mind using and applying terms very vaguely, sometimes in a broader, sometimes a narrower, in a more nearly or distantly related sense.

For the first few times, it was entertaining to listen to him, indeed his glibness of tongue was amazing. One would have thought one was standing in front of a Sophist orator, a person who gets amusement and practice from lending plausibility to the strangest things. Unfortunately, this initial impression grew dull all too soon, for at the end of every conversation the man would come back to his same theme, however I might try to prevent it. He could not be made to concentrate on older events, although he was interested in them himself and had them in mind down to the smallest details. Instead, some petty circumstance would often distract him in the middle of telling something from world history and propel him back to his odious favorite idea.

One of our afternoon walks was particularly unfortunate in this respect. Let the story of it be representative here of all the other instances, which could tire the reader and perhaps even distress him.

On our way through town we were met by an ancient beggar woman, whose pleas and importunities disturbed his story-telling.—“Be off, you old witch!” he said and walked past. She shouted the well-known saying after him, only a little changed, since she could plainly see that the unkind man was himself old: “If you did not want to get old, you should have had yourself hanged when you were young!” He turned around furiously, and I feared a scene.—“Hanged!” he shouted, “have myself hanged! No, that would not have been right, I was too honest a fellow for that. But hang, hang myself, truly, that is what I should have done. I should direct a shot of powder at myself, rather than live to see that I am no longer worth one.” The woman stood there as though turned to stone, but he went on: “You have spoken a great truth, old hag! And because they have not as yet drowned or burned you, you shall be rewarded for your little saying.” He handed her a *Büsel*, which is not a coin casually given to beggars.

We had crossed the first Rhine bridge and were walking toward the inn where we meant to get refreshments, and as I was trying to steer him back to our earlier conversation, a very pretty girl unexpectedly came toward us along the pleasant foot path. She stopped in front of us, curtsied politely, and exclaimed, “Well, well, Captain, and where

are you going?" and some other things customarily said on such occasions.—"Mademoiselle," he replied, a little embarrassed, "I do not know . . ." "What?" she said with sweet amazement. "Do you forget your friends so quickly?" The word "forget" annoyed him. He shook his head and replied quite crossly, "Truly, Mademoiselle, I would not know!"—Next, she said in some amusement, but very temperately, "Take care, Captain, for another time I might fail to recognize *you*!" And so she hastened past us, striding ahead vigorously, without looking back. Suddenly my fellow wayfarer hit himself violently on the head with both fists. "Oh, what an ass I am!" he exclaimed. "I am an old ass! So now you see whether I am right or not." Thereupon he launched very vehemently into his customary speeches and opinions, which this incident only confirmed him in the more. I neither can nor want to repeat the philippic he uttered against himself. Finally he turned to me and said, "I call on you to be my witness! Do you remember that woman shopkeeper on the corner, who is neither young nor pretty? I greet her every time we go by and sometimes exchange a few friendly words with her; and yet thirty years have gone by since she showed me favor. Now, on the other hand, it has not been four weeks since this girl here was more than a little obliging to me, and I act as though I do not know her and return insult for her courtesy! Do I not always say, ingratitude is the worst vice, and no one would be ungrateful if he were not forgetful!"

We entered the inn, and only the crowd of tipplers swarming in the corridors put an end to the invectives he was spitting out against himself and others of his age. He was quiet, and I hoped he was pacified, when we entered an upstairs room and found a young man by himself, walking up and down, whom the captain greeted by name. I was pleased to meet him, for my old companion had said many good things about him and told me that this man, who worked at the War Office, had several times very unselfishly been of great service to him when the pensions were delayed. I was glad that the conversation was turning to general subjects, and we drank a bottle of wine as we continued it. At this point, however, another failing unfortunately came to light, one my knight had in common with other obstinate people. Not only was he basically unable to rid himself of that fixed idea of his, but he would hold firmly onto any momentary unpleasant impression and would grumble on and on, endlessly, about his feelings. His most recent annoyance with himself had not even died down, when now something new was added, to be sure of a quite different nature. That is to say, he had not been glancing around very long before he noticed that there were two cups and a double portion of coffee on the table. Besides, as an old *roué* himself, he had apparently sniffed out some other evi-

dence that the young man had not been alone earlier. And hardly had he conceived the notion, which then became a probability, that the pretty girl had paid a visit here, when his anger was compounded by the most singular jealousy, and his confusion was complete.

Before I even suspected anything (for up till now I had been conversing quite innocently with the young man), the captain adopted an unpleasant tone that I well recognized and began to make gibes about the pair of cups and various other matters. The younger man was taken aback and tried to parry cheerfully and reasonably, as is customary with people of urbanity. But the old man kept on being harshly uncivil, so that the other had no choice but to pick up his hat and stick and upon departure let fall a fairly unambiguous challenge. Now the captain's fury burst forth, being all the more violent since in the meantime he had drunk a whole bottle of wine almost by himself. He hit his fist on the table and kept shouting, "I shall kill that fellow!" This was actually not meant so badly, for he often used this phrase when somebody opposed or otherwise displeased him. But the affair was just as unexpectedly exacerbated on the way back, for I was imprudent enough to remind him how he had extolled this very official's accommodating readiness to serve him. No! I have never again encountered such wrath in an individual against himself. This was the highly emotional concluding speech in the series occasioned by that pretty girl. Here I saw remorse and penitence exaggerated to the point of caricature, and really to the point of genius, since all passion is a substitute for genius. He returned to all the occurrences of our afternoon walk, reprimanded himself for them oratorically, finally summoned up the witch again, and got into such a state that I was afraid he would throw himself into the Rhine. If I had been sure of my ability to fish him right out again, as Mentor did his Telemachus, I would have let him jump, and have taken him home cooled off, at least this once.

I immediately confided the matter to Larse, and next morning we went to see the young man, whom my friend finally made laugh with his wryness. We agreed to initiate a casual meeting, at which a settlement would come about. The most amusing thing about it was that this time too the captain had slept off his rudeness and was ready to appease the young man, who, for his part, did not attach much importance to quarreling either. The whole thing was disposed of in one morning, and since the happening did not remain secret, I did not escape some teasing from my friends, who could have predicted out of their own experience how burdensome the captain's friendship would occasionally become for me.

However, while I am now trying to think of what I should relate next, a rare trick of memory brings to mind again that venerable ca-

thedral building, to which I was devoting special attention in those very days and which in any case constantly presents itself to the eye both in town and in the country.

The more I contemplated its façade, the more my first impression was confirmed and expanded, namely, that here sublimity and amenity had entered into a covenant. If enormousness, encountering us as a mass, is not to frighten and confuse us as we attempt to investigate its details, then it must accept an unnatural, seemingly impossible, combination: it must be joined with the pleasant. The only way it becomes possible for us to describe the impression made by this old cathedral is by imagining the union of two qualities that are incompatible, and that in itself shows how worthy of our esteem this old monument is. We shall now begin in earnest to give a portrayal of how such contradictory elements could peaceably permeate and combine with each other.

First of all, leaving aside the towers for the time being, let us devote our observations to the façade alone, which meets our eyes commandingly as an oblong set on end. If we approach it at dusk, or in moonlight, or on a starry night, when its parts grow more or less indistinct and finally are indistinguishable, then all we see is a colossal wall, the height of which is in pleasing proportion to the width. If we contemplate it by day and exert our minds to abstract the whole from the details, then we perceive a front which not only closes off the inner spaces of the building but also covers much that is adjacent to them. The apertures in this enormous surface answer to interior requirements, and in line with the latter we can immediately divide it up into nine fields. The great middle door, which leads to the nave of the church, strikes our eye first. Two smaller ones are situated at both sides of it and belong to the side aisles. Over the main door our glance meets the wheel-shaped window which is meant to shed a mystic light into the church and its vaulted ceiling. At its sides are seen two vertical, oblong openings which contrast significantly with the middle one and are implicitly incorporated in the base of the upward-striving towers. In the third story there is a series of three openings, designated for belfries and other ecclesiastical needs. On top one sees the whole horizontally closed off, not by a cornice but by the balustrade of a gallery. The nine spaces described are supported, framed, and divided into three great perpendicular spaces by four pillars that soar up from the ground.

It cannot be denied that the whole mass has a beautiful proportion of height to breadth, and thanks to these pillars and the slender sections between them its details acquire a uniformly light quality.

However, let us persist in our abstraction and try to imagine this enormous wall without its adornments, just with its sturdy buttresses and the necessary apertures, but again only as many as absolutely re-

quired; let us also grant good proportions to these main sections: then the whole may, to be sure, seem serious and dignified, but, for all of that, oppressively joyless and inartistically plain. For an artwork that is wholly made up of large, simple, harmonious parts can make a noble and dignified impression; but real enjoyment is based on pleasure, and can only result when all the details have been developed and balanced.

But it is precisely in this respect that the building we are contemplating satisfies us in the highest degree. We see that each and every ornament is in complete harmony with every part that it decorates, is subordinated thereto, and appears to have been generated thereby. Variety of such a kind always gives us great pleasure, because it is ultimately derived from what is appropriate and therefore also provides a feeling of unity, which must not be lacking if the result is to be lauded as supreme art.

It was through such means that a massive wall, an impenetrable screen, which had to show, besides, that it was the base for two sky-high towers, was made to appear to the eye as, of course, self-supporting and self-contained, but light and delicate withal, and to give the impression of unshakable solidarity although perforated a thousand times.

The problem has been solved in a most felicitous way. The openings in the wall, its solid places, the pillars—each of these has its special character, which corresponds to the use for which it has been particularly designated. This character, then, is communicated by degrees to the subordinate parts, and so everything is decorated in conformity with the rest: large as well as small features are found in their right place, where they can easily be appreciated, and so amenity is displayed within immensity. I would draw attention just to the doors and how, with the incredibly profuse decorations on their jambs and pointed arches, they seem in perspective to be sunken into the thickness of the wall; to the window whose round form creates the impression of a rose; to the outlines of that rose's tracery; and to the slender tubular columns of the perpendicular sections. One must visualize the pillars as they recede, level by level, along with the slender, pointed, likewise upward-soaring little structures attached to them which are designed, with a kind of baldachin supported on fragile columns, for the protection of saints' images, and how every rib, every boss eventually becomes a flower head with foliage or some other natural form reinterpreted in stone. To judge and bring life to my statement, one should compare it with the building, if not in actuality, at least in pictures showing both the whole and the detail. Some may think I have exaggerated. I know that I myself, although enraptured by this great work on first sight, needed much time in order to become intimately acquainted with its merit.

Having grown up among detractors of Gothic architecture, I persisted in my distaste for the often florid and overintricate ornamentation,

finding that its capriciousness clashed very badly with an atmosphere of religious gloom. I was confirmed in my animosity by the fact that I had encountered only uninspired works of this kind, in which neither good proportions nor pure logic can be perceived. Here, however, I felt as though I were beholding a new revelation, for those objectionable features were altogether missing, and indeed the very opposite of them was thrusting itself upon me.

However, as I went on looking and meditating longer and longer, I felt I was discovering even greater merits than the aforesaid ones. I had discerned the correct relationships of the larger sections and the smallest details of the rich but always appropriate decoration; but now I also ascertained the reciprocal connections between these manifold ornaments, the articulation of one main part with the other, the interlacing of details that are analogous but very divergent in form, ranging from saint to monster, from leaf to spike. The more I investigated, the more astonished I became; the more I amused and fatigued myself with measuring and sketching, the more my attachment grew, and I spent a great deal of time on this, partly studying what was before me, partly trying to restore, both on paper and in my thoughts, what was missing and incomplete, especially in regard to the towers.

Since I saw that this building had its foundation on former German soil and had progressed so far at a genuinely German time, and that the name of the master builder on the modest gravestone had an equally native German sound and origin, I took it upon myself, in consideration of the merit of this work of art, to change the old, infamous designation, "Gothic" architecture, and to claim it as our nation's "German" architecture. Nor did I fail to make my sentiments public, at first by word of mouth and then in a little essay¹⁵³ dedicated to "the blessed spirit of Erwin of Steinbach."¹⁵⁴

When this biographical narrative arrives at the period in which the aforesaid pages appeared in print, included by Herder in his booklet *Concerning German Art and Manner*, then something more will be said on this important topic. Before turning from it now, however, I shall use the opportunity to vindicate the motto that heads this present volume to anyone who might have doubts about it. I know very well, of course, that one could adduce many a contrary experience to disprove that good old optimistic German saying, "What one wishes for in youth, one has plenty of in old age," and that it may contain much to quibble about; but there are many favorable experiences to corroborate it too, and I shall explain my thoughts on the matter.

Our wishes are presentiments of capabilities that lie within us, harbingers of what we shall be able to accomplish. The things we can and would like to do are presented to us by our imagination as being beyond us and in the future; and we feel a longing for something already latent

in us. Thus our passionate reaching out in advance transforms a true possibility into an imaginary reality. If a particular tendency is definitely in our nature, then a part of our early wish will be fulfilled at every step of our development, in a straight line if circumstances are favorable, and if they are unfavorable, then in a roundabout way from which we constantly turn back to the right one. So people are seen attaining to earthly goods through their perseverance; they surround themselves with riches, magnificence, and outward honor. Even more surely, others strive for spiritual advantages; they acquire a clear overview of things, peace of mind, and security for the present and future.

However, there is also a third tendency, which as a mixture of the other two must be the one surest of success. If, that is to say, a person's youth coincides with a pregnant epoch, one in which productivity predominates over destruction, and his presentiments about the demands and promises of such a time awaken early, then, urged on by outward incentives to participate actively, he will reach out in all directions, and the wish will stir in him to be effective in a variety of endeavors. Now, in addition to his human limitations, so many incidental hindrances will arise that either a project begun does not progress, or something grasped falls out of his hand, and one wish after the other disintegrates. However, if his wishes have issued from a pure heart and meet the requirements of the time, then he may calmly let things lie as they fall, right and left, in full confidence that they will not only be discovered and picked up again, but that many related matters, not touched on or even thought of, will also come to light. If, during the course of our life, we see others accomplish what we ourselves earlier felt it was our calling to do, but had to abandon along with much else, then we get the beautiful feeling that mankind in combination is the only true human being, and that the individual can be glad and happy only when he has the courage to feel himself part of the whole.

This observation is quite appropriate here; for when I consider the affection I felt for those old structures, when I calculate the amount of time I devoted to the Strassburg cathedral alone, the attention with which I later contemplated the cathedrals at Cologne and Freiburg, and how I was increasingly impressed by the worth of these buildings, I could blame myself for afterwards having ignored them, and indeed relegated them to the background completely because I was attracted by a more highly developed kind of art. Now, however, in very recent times I see attention being directed once again to these objects. Affection, even passionate affection for them is emerging and flourishing, and I see capable young men so much gripped by it that, without counting cost, they devote their energies, time, care, and fortune to these monuments of a bygone world; and then I am pleasantly reminded that there was merit to what I formerly wanted and wished for. I see with

satisfaction how they are not only able to appreciate what our forefathers accomplished but also try to show us the original intentions. On the basis of unexecuted plans, which are extant at least in pictures, they acquaint us with the idea, which after all remains the essential part of every undertaking. And so they earnestly and circumspectly try to enliven and shed light on what seems a confusing past. With these words I am particularly praising the worthy Sulpiz Boisserée,¹⁵⁵ who is tirelessly preparing a splendid series of copperplates that will present the Cologne cathedral as a model of those vast conceptions, those intentions of soaring heavenwards like the Tower of Babel; but the available earthly means were so inadequate that these plans could not possibly be executed. We may previously have been astonished at the progress made with these edifices; but when we learn what accomplishments the builders actually had in mind, our admiration will be boundless.

Would that literary-artistic undertakings of this kind might be duly promoted by all those who have vigor, means, and influence! Then the great and gigantic thoughts of our forebears would be illustrated, and we could get an idea of what they dared to want. The insight emerging from this will not lack for results, and we shall finally be able to judge those works properly. Yes, this will happen most fundamentally when our energetic young friend, besides the monograph devoted to the Cologne cathedral, makes a detailed inquiry into the history of our medieval architecture. Further, if someone unearths whatever can be learned about the technical application of this art, and all its characteristic features compared with Greco-Roman and Oriental-Egyptian architecture, then there can be little more to do in this field. And when the results of these patriotic efforts, now communicated to friends privately, are submitted to the public, I, with true satisfaction, shall be able to repeat that proverb in its best sense: "What one wishes for in youth, one has plenty of in old age."

With such effects, which belong to posterity, one may rely on time and wait for opportunity; but, on the other hand, there are things which must be enjoyed right away in one's youth, freshly, like ripe fruit. I hope I may be permitted thus abruptly to mention dancing, which every day, every hour, makes as much impression on the ear in Strassburg and Alsace as the cathedral does on the eye. From our early childhood onward, my father himself had taught dancing to me and my sister, which may well seem an incongruous role for such a serious man. But he kept his dignity even while doing this, and gave us very precise instruction in the figures and steps. When he had brought us to the point where we could dance a minuet, he would play some simple piece in three-quarter time for us on a little flute, and we moved about to that as well as we could. Also from childhood on, at the French theater,

I had seen, if not ballets, at any rate solo dances and pas-de-deux, and had taken note of various odd foot movements and all sorts of leaps. When we had enough of the minuet, I would beg my father for other kinds of dance music, of which the music albums offered plenty in the form of gigue and murkies, and I would spontaneously invent the steps and other movements for them, their rhythm being quite well suited to my limbs and innate to them. This was moderately amusing for my father, who indeed sometimes gave himself and us the fun of letting his "monkeys" dance in this way. After my misfortune with Gretchen and during my whole Leipzig sojourn I stayed away from the dance floor. I still have not forgotten one ball where they compelled me to do the minuet: Rhythm and movement seemed to have departed from my limbs, and I no longer remembered either the steps or the figures. I would have gotten disgraceful marks if the majority of onlookers had not asserted that my awkwardness was mere obstinacy and was intended to take away all the desire of the females to make me dance and join their ranks against my will.

During my stay in Frankfurt I was completely cut off from such amusements, but in Strassburg my limbs' capacity for rhythm soon stirred again, along with my zest for life in general. Both on Sundays and weekdays, one could not stroll past any place of amusement without finding a merry crowd gathered there to dance and, to be sure, usually whirling around in circles. Likewise, there were private balls in the country houses, and there was already talk of the brilliant masked balls of the coming winter. Of course I would have been out of place there and useless to the company; but a friend who waltzed very well advised me to practice first in less good social groups, so that later on I would be able to pass muster in the better ones. He introduced me to a dancing master who was known for his skill, and this man promised to give me more advanced instruction if I would just to some extent review and master the first basic steps. He was one of those Frenchmen with a dry, clever nature, and he received me amicably. I paid him for a month in advance and received twelve coupons, in return for which he pledged me a certain number of instruction hours. The man was strict, precise, but not pedantic, and since I already had had some previous practice, I soon satisfied him and won his approval.

One circumstance, however, did a great deal to facilitate this teacher's instruction: that is, he had two daughters, both of them pretty and not yet twenty years old. Having been trained in this art from childhood on, they demonstrated great skill in it, and as partners would quickly have helped even the most awkward pupil to make some progress. They were both very polite, spoke only French, and I, for my part, took very great care not to look clumsy and absurd to them. It was my good fortune that they too praised me, and were always willing to dance a

minuet with me to the accompaniment of their father's little fiddle. Indeed, although surely this was more trouble for them, they even gradually drilled the turns of the waltz into me. The father, in any case, did not seem to have many clients, and they led a solitary life. Therefore, when my lesson was over, they sometimes asked me to stay on and pass a little time away chatting with them, which I was certainly glad to do, especially since I liked the younger one quite well and their conduct was in general most decorous. Sometimes I would read something aloud from a novel, and they would do the same. The older one, who was as pretty as her sister, and perhaps prettier, did not appeal to me as much, although her behavior toward me was unquestionably more obliging and more agreeable in every respect. She was always at hand during my lessons and sometimes she drew them out past the hour. Consequently I would think myself obligated to offer the father two coupons, which, however, he did not accept. The younger one, on the other hand, while she was not unfriendly to me, preferred to be quietly alone, and had to be summoned by the father to relieve her older sister.

One evening I became aware of the reason for this. I was about to go into the parlor with the older one, after the dance was finished, when she held me back and said, "Let us wait here a bit, for I must confess to you that my sister has a fortune teller in there who is supposed to show her from the cards how things stand with an absent friend on whom she has set her heart and all her hopes. Mine is not spoken for," she continued, "and I shall have to get used to seeing it scorned." Thereupon I made a few polite remarks, replying that she could only be convinced of its status if she too would question the wise woman. And (I said) I would do this also, for I had long since wanted to experience something of this kind, not having had any faith in it previously. She rebuked me for that and asserted that nothing in the world was more dependable than the pronouncements of this oracle; however, it must not be questioned sacrilegiously, just for fun, only for genuine concerns. Yet in the end I made her go into the room with me, once she had ascertained that the ceremony was over. We found her sister in very high spirits, jocular and almost witty, and even toward me she was more obliging than usual; for she seemed to have gotten assurances about her absent friend, and apparently thought there would be no harm in showing a little courtesy to her sister's friend (as she took me to be), who was present.

Now we flattered the old woman and promised her good payment if she would reveal true things to the older sister, and to me as well. With the usual preparations and ceremonies she laid out her wares and, to be sure, told the fair one's fortune first. She carefully observed the positions of the cards, but then seemed to falter and be reluctant to

“I understand,” said the younger girl, who had already become better acquainted with interpreting this magical board. “You are hesitating because you do not want to reveal anything unpleasant to my sister, but that card is cursed!” The older one grew pale, but composed herself and said, “Do go on and speak; it will not cost you your head.” The old woman, with a deep sigh, then pointed out to her that she was in love, that she was not loved in return, that another person was standing in the way, and more things of this kind. One could see the poor girl’s embarrassment. The old woman thought she could improve matters a little by arousing hopes for money and letters.—“Letters,” said the pretty child, “I do not expect, and money I do not care about. If it is true, as you say, that I am in love, then I deserve a heart that loves me in return.”—“Let us see if it will get better,” replied the old woman, shuffling the cards and laying them out a second time; but it had only grown worse, as we could all plainly see. The fair one’s card was not only more isolated, but was surrounded with many troubles; her friend had moved somewhat farther away and the intermediate figures had come closer. The old woman wanted to lay the cards out a third time, hoping for a better prospect, but the pretty child could hold back no longer: she broke out into uncontrolled weeping, her sweet bosom heaved violently, she turned around, and ran out of the room. I did not know what I should do. Affection tied me to the one here, and pity drove me to go to the other; my situation was quite painful. “Console Lucinda,” said the younger one. “Go after her.” But I hesitated. How should I console her without declaring at least some sort of affection for her, and could I, at such a moment, do this in a coolly temperate manner?—“Let us go together,” I said to Emily. “I am not sure she will welcome my presence,” she answered. Nevertheless, we went, only to find her door bolted. Lucinda would not answer, however much we knocked, called, and pleaded—“We must leave her alone,” said Emily. “She will not have it otherwise!” And actually, when I reviewed her conduct from the time of our first acquaintanceship, there was always something vehement and erratic about her, and the way she usually showed her affection for me was by not manifesting her rudeness. What was I to do? I paid the old woman generously for the mischief she had caused and was about to depart, when Emily said, “I make it a condition that the cards now be dealt for you.” The old woman was ready to do so.—“Let me not be present, then!” I shouted, and hurried down the stairs.

The next day I did not have the courage to go back there. The third day, early in the morning, Emily sent a boy, who before this had brought me many a message from the sisters and taken them flowers and fruit from me in return, to tell me please not to be absent today. I came at the usual hour and found the father there alone. He still had some

touching up to do on my steps and figures, my retreats and advances, my deportment and demeanor, but in other respects seemed to be satisfied with me. Toward the end of the hour the younger girl came and danced a very graceful minuet with me; her movements in this were extraordinarily lovely, and the father averred he had never seen a prettier or more skillful pair on his dance floor. After the lesson I went into the parlor as usual. The father left us alone, and I missed Lucinda.—“She is in bed,” said Emily, “and I am glad to see it. Do not be concerned about her. Her mental illness is only relieved when she thinks she is physically ill. Since she does not want to die, she will do what we want. We have certain home remedies which she takes, and then rests; and gradually the raging waves subside. She is remarkably good and sweet when she imagines herself to be ill. Basically she feels quite well, since it is just an attack of passion, and so she thinks up all sorts of fanciful ways that she will die, and takes pleasure in being afraid of them, as children do when they hear ghost stories. Only yesterday evening, she told me with great vehemence that she was certainly going to die this time, and that the false, ungrateful friend, who had been so gallant at first and now treated her so shabbily, was not to be allowed in her presence again until she was really at the point of death. Then she would reproach him very bitterly and immediately give up the ghost.”—“I swear I am not guilty of having expressed any affection for her!” I exclaimed. “I know the person who can best vouch for this.” Emily smiled and replied, “I understand you, but if we are not clever and resolute, all of us will find ourselves in a bad situation. What would you say if I asked you not to continue with your lessons? You have at most four coupons left from last month, and my father has already let it be known that he thinks it would be unconscionable to take your money anymore, unless you want to devote yourself more seriously to the art of dance. He says that you now possess all the skill a young man needs to have in society.”—“And it is you, Emily, who give me this advice about staying away from your house?” I asked.—“Yes, it is I,” she said, “but not on my account. Just listen. When you hurried away the day before yesterday, I had the cards laid out for you, and the same verdict was repeated three times, always more emphatically. Your card was surrounded by all sorts of good and pleasant things, by friends and men of importance, and money was not lacking. The women kept themselves at some distance. My poor sister, especially, was always the one farthest away; another girl kept moving closer to you, but never came to your side, for a third person, a man, placed himself in the way. I shall have to admit to you that I imagined myself to be the second lady, and after this confession you will best be able to understand my well-meant advice. I have pledged my heart and hand to an absent friend, and up to now I have loved him better

than anyone else. But possibly your presence would grow to mean more to me than before, and just imagine the difficult position in which you would be between two sisters, one of whom you had made unhappy with your affection, and the other with your coldness, and all this misery would be for nothing and for the sake of a short time. For if we had not already known who you are and what your prospects are, the cards would have set it before my eyes very plainly. Farewell," she said, and gave me her hand. I hesitated.—"No," she said, leading me to the door. "And now, to make sure this is really the last time we talk, take what I would otherwise have denied you." She flung her arms around my neck and kissed me most lovingly. I embraced her and clasped her tightly to me.

At this moment the side door flew open and her sister, in a light but decent nightdress, leaped out, shouting, "You are not the only one who is going to bid him farewell!" Emily let me go, and Lucinda took hold of me, clasped herself tightly to my breast, pressed her black curls against my cheeks, and stayed in this position for a while. And so I found myself caught in a vise between the two sisters, just as Emily had predicted a moment before. Lucinda released me and looked earnestly into my face. I was about to grasp her hand and say something friendly to her, but she turned away, stalked up and down the room a few times, and then threw herself down in a corner of the sofa. Emily went up to her but was at once repulsed, and then ensued a scene which is still a painful memory to me. Although there was nothing theatrical about the scene in real life, and it could be expected of a lively young Fenchwoman, it could nevertheless be done again very well on stage, but only by a good, sensitive actress.

Lucinda overwhelmed her sister with a thousand reproaches. "This is not the first heart," she exclaimed, "that has been inclined toward me and stolen by you. It was just the same with the absent friend, who in the end became engaged to you before my very eyes. I had to look on, and I bore it, but I know how many thousand tears it cost me. Now you have also snatched this one from me, without letting the other one go, and who knows how many you can hold on to at the same time? I am open and good-natured, and everyone thinks he soon knows me and can neglect me. You are secretive and quiet, and people imagine you are concealing something marvelous. But nothing is there except a cold and selfish heart that lets everything be sacrificed to itself. However, it lies so deeply hidden in your breast that it is hard for anyone to know, just as little as one knows my warm, true heart, which I wear out in the open, like my face."

Emily, who had sat down next to her sister, remained silent while the latter talked more and more heatedly and expressed her opinions on certain particulars that I really had no business hearing about.

Meanwhile Emily, who was trying to placate her sister, made a signal behind her back for me to leave. But jealousy and suspicion have a thousand eyes, and Lucinda seemed to have noticed this also. She sprang up and came straight for me, but not in a rage. She stood in front of me and seemed to be reflecting on something. Then she said, "I know I have lost you, and I make no further claims on you. But you shall not have him either, sister!" With these words, putting both hands into my hair, she fairly took me by the head, pressed my face against hers, and kissed me repeatedly on the lips. "Now," she exclaimed, "fear my curse. Misfortune on top of misfortune, forever and ever, to her who kisses these lips for the first time after me! Now just let someone dare to take up with him. I know that Heaven will hear me this time. And you, sir, hurry away now, hurry as fast as you can!"

I flew down the stairs with the firm resolve never to enter that house again.

Book Ten

German poets, since they no longer stood united as members of a guild, were at a complete disadvantage in society. They had neither base, nor position, nor prestige, unless they were favored by some extraneous circumstance, and therefore it was merely a question of chance whether talent would be born to honor or disgrace. Although a poor wretch might be conscious of his intellect and capabilities, he would have to eke out a living and, under the pressure of immediate needs, waste such gifts as he had received from the Muses. The occasional poem, which is the oldest and most genuine of all genres, degenerated to such a degree that our nation, even now, cannot imagine what great merit it has. While a poet might not actually follow in Günther's footsteps, his role in the world was still the sadly subordinate one of clown and parasite, so that both in the theater and on the stage of the world he represented a figure to be played with at will.

If, on the other hand, the Muse associated herself with men of note, the latter acquired a luster which reflected back on her, the giver. Urbane noblemen like Hagedorn, distinguished burghers like Brockes,¹⁵⁶ authentic scholars like Haller took their place among the nation's leaders, on an equal footing with the most prominent and highly esteemed individuals. Special respect was paid to those persons who, in addition to their pleasant talent, excelled as loyal, diligent public officials. Therefore Uz,¹⁵⁷ Rabener, and Weisse enjoyed a quite particular regard, because in them one could appreciate the synthesis of most heterogeneous and seldom combined qualities.

Now, however, the time was at hand when poetic genius would discover self-awareness, create its own circumstances, and understand how to lay the foundations for independent respectability. Klopstock had all the qualities required for instituting such an epoch. As a youth, he was pure both in his feelings and morals. Having been solidly and thoroughly educated, he put a high value on himself and everything he did, from childhood on; and, carefully planning his progress through life in advance and anticipating the strength of character he would attain, he turned toward the highest subject imaginable: the Messiah. This name, which betokens infinite attributes, was to be glorified anew by him. The Redeemer was to be the hero whom he would accompany through earthly abasement and affliction up to the most sublime heavenly triumphs. Everything divine, angelic, and human that resided in Klopstock's young soul was brought into play. Reared on the Bible and nourished by its strength, he now lived with patriarchs, prophets,

and precursors as though with contemporaries. But for centuries their only function has been to draw a luminous circle around Him whose humiliation they contemplate with astonishment and in whose exaltation they will take a glorious part. For in the end, after dark and terrible hours, the eternal Judge will unveil His countenance to acknowledge His Son and co-God again, and the Son, in turn, will lead the disaffected humans, and even one of the fallen angels, back to the Father. The heavens are alive with the jubilation of a thousand angel voices around the throne, and radiant love pours out over the universe, which shortly before had concentrated its gaze on a horrible place of sacrifice. The heavenly peace that Klopstock felt during the conception and execution of his poem is communicated even now to everyone who reads the first ten cantos, provided that he does not voice some demands which we cannot easily waive, considering the advances in our culture.

The dignity of his subject exalted the poet's feelings about his own personality. He himself would one day enter these choruses, and the God-man would single him out and express gratitude, face to face, for his efforts, as he had already been thanked on earth, very sweetly, by the many pure tears that were shed by every pious, feeling heart. Such were his innocent, childlike sentiments and hopes, and only an upright heart can have and hold them. Thus Klopstock fully won the right to regard himself as a sanctified person, and so he was also intent on keeping his actions most punctiliously pure. Even in his old age it worried him extremely that his first love had been a girl who married another man, leaving Klopstock uncertain whether she had really loved him or been worthy of him. The sentiments binding him to Meta,¹⁵⁸ their calm, heartfelt affection and brief, holy marriage, the widower's disinclination to a second union—all this is the sort of thing that one would surely be permitted to remember some day in the ranks of the blessed.

He was further encouraged to treat himself with dignity by the fact that he was well received for a while in friendly Denmark at the house of a great statesman¹⁵⁹ and excellent human being. In this higher social circle, which held itself aloof but at the same time was very much interested in outside practices and observing the world, the tendency became even more pronounced in him. His calm demeanor, his measured speech, his laconism even while speaking freely and decisively, gave him, throughout his life, a certain statesmanlike, ministerial air that seemed to conflict with his tender sentiments regarding nature, although both issued from the same source. His first works are a pure prototype and reflection of all this, and that inevitably won them incredible influence. However, it has almost never been mentioned as one of his outstanding qualities that he personally did much to help other ambitious people with their lives and poetry.

But it is just such assistance to young persons in their literary ac-

tivities, just such a desire to advance promising individuals not favored by fortune, and to ease their path, that has ennobled a German poet who, though he may only occupy second place as regards self-assumed dignity, is first in practical influence. It will escape no one that Gleim is meant here. He occupied a somewhat obscure but lucrative position, and resided in a well-situated, not overlarge town¹⁶⁰ which was enlivened by military, civil, and literary activity and provided the income for a large, rich religious establishment, while reserving a share for its own local advantage. Gleim felt a lively creative impulse in himself, but, strong as it was, he was not completely satisfied and therefore yielded to another, perhaps even stronger impulse, that of helping others to be creative. Both activities were constantly intertwined throughout his whole long life. He could no sooner have given up breathing than writing and giving; and through helping needy talents of all kinds over earlier or later embarrassments, and thereby really promoting literature, he gained so many friends, debtors, and dependents that there was a ready acceptance for his prolix poetry, since these people had nothing to give him in return for his abundant benevolences except toleration of his poems.

The high concept these two men justifiably formed of their own merit encouraged others to think well of themselves also, and this brought about very great and fine results both in public and private. But their self-awareness, respectable as it was, visited a peculiar evil on themselves, their surroundings, and their time. Although in regard to their spiritual influence both men may unhesitatingly be called great, compared to the world they remained small, and their outside relationships were inconsequential when contrasted with more colorful lives. The day is long, and so is the night; one cannot always write poetry, help, or give; their time could not be occupied like that of men of the world, and those who are aristocratic and rich; therefore they put too high a value on their own particular narrow circumstances, and lent their daily activities an importance that could be felt only within their own circle. They enjoyed their jests more than they should have, for while these may have afforded a pleasant moment, they could certainly not be considered significant afterwards. They deservedly received praise and honor from others, and returned it in moderation, but still too abundantly; and because they set great store by their affection, they delighted in expressing it repeatedly, and spared neither paper nor ink in doing so. Thus arose those correspondences which amaze the modern world with their lack of substance, and people nowadays cannot be blamed if they can hardly conceive how men of superior quality could possibly have been entertained by such a vapid exchange, or if they express the wish that such papers remain unpublished. But let those few volumes nevertheless stand alongside many others on the bookshelf as a reminder

that even the most excellent person can only live from day to day and merely have paltry entertainment, so long as he relies too much on his own resources and fails to reach into the abundance of the outside world, which is the only place he can simultaneously nourish his growth and measure it.

The activity of those men was at its zenith when we young men began stirring about within our circle too, and I was well on my way toward adopting the same reciprocal flattery and uncritical acceptance, the same "lifting and carrying," with younger friends, if not also with older persons. What I produced would always be praised within my sphere. Young women, friends, and patrons will not find fault with anything undertaken and composed in their behalf, but the end result of such civility is the expression of an empty delight in one another, and one's character is easily weakened by such phrases if it is not tempered from time to time by pursuit of higher excellence.

And so, thanks to an unexpected acquaintanceship, I could count myself lucky that all the smugness, desire to preen, vanity, pride, and arrogance that was either latent or active in me was exposed to a very hard test, which was of a unique kind, thoroughly out of keeping with the time, and thus all the more penetrating and painful.

The most significant event, the one destined to have the most important results for me, was my acquaintance and subsequent closer connection with Herder.¹⁶¹ He had accompanied the melancholic Prince of Holstein-Eutin on his travels and had come with him to Strassburg. As soon as we learned of Herder's presence, our group felt a strong desire to approach him, and I, quite unexpectedly and by coincidence, was the first to have this good fortune. That is to say, I had gone to the Inn of the Spirit to look up some important stranger or other. On the ground floor, right at the staircase, I encountered a man about to ascend it whom I could have mistaken for a clergyman. His powdered hair tucked up in a round curl indicated this, as did his black garb, but even more his long black silk cloak, the ends of which he had gathered together and stuck in his pocket. This somewhat conspicuous, but on the whole gallant and pleasing attire, which I had already heard people talk about, left me in no doubt that this was the famous new arrival, and my opening words could not fail to convince him at once that I knew who he was. He asked my name, which could not have meant anything to him; but my forthright manner seemed to please him, for he responded very amicably, and when we reached the top of the stairs he was ready for a lively conversation. I have forgotten whom we visited at that time; in any case, when we parted I requested permission to see him in his rooms, and he granted me this in a very friendly way. I did not neglect to make frequent use of the privilege, and found him increasingly interesting. His manner, which was very practiced and

proper without really being adroit, had a certain gentleness about it. He had a round face, an impressive forehead, a slightly turned-up nose, and a most uniquely pleasant, kindly mouth, in spite of its rather protruding lips. Under his black eyebrows was a pair of coal-black eyes, whose intensity was not diminished by the fact that one of them was perpetually red and inflamed. By dint of manifold questions he sought to acquaint himself with me and my situation, and his magnetism began to affect me more and more strongly. It was my nature, in any case, to be confiding, and especially from him I had no secrets at all. However, it was not long before the pulse of rejection began beating within him, which caused me no little discomfort. I told him various things about my childhood activities and amusements, among other things about a collection of wax seals, which I had assembled chiefly in co-operation with that family friend who had the large correspondence. I had arranged them according to the state calendar and by virtue of doing so had become well versed in all the potentates and the greater and lesser authorities and powers, down to the nobles, and these heraldic signs had very often been a mnemonic aid to me, especially at the coronation festivities. I spoke of these things with some satisfaction, but he disagreed with me and not only repudiated such an interest totally but also almost spoiled it for me with his ridicule.

I was destined to endure quite a bit more from this contradictory spirit of his, for he decided to tarry longer in Strassburg, both because he intended to part company with the prince, and because of his eye trouble. This is one of the most inconvenient and unpleasant of all maladies, and even more burdensome since the only cure is through a painful, highly annoying, and uncertain operation. Namely, the lachrymal sac is closed off at the lower end in such a way that the moisture it contains cannot drain toward the nose and, what is more, there is no opening in the adjacent bone through which this secretion can naturally occur. Therefore the base of the sac must be cut open and a hole drilled through the bone; then a horsehair is inserted at the tearpoint, drawn through the open sac and the newly connected canal, and moved back and forth daily in order to establish the communication between the two parts; and none of this can be reached or done unless an incision is first made externally in that area.

Having left the prince, Herder had now moved into his own quarters and made the decision to be operated on by Lobstein. At this point the exercises by which I had tried to blunt my sensitivity stood me in good stead, for I was able to be present at the operation and be of service and assistance to this most worthy man in many ways. There was every reason now to admire his great steadfastness and patience, for neither during the numerous surgical woundings nor the frequently repeated, painful bandagings did he prove to be even slightly bad-tempered, and

he seemed to be the one among us who was suffering least. But between times, to be sure, we had to put up with a great deal from his changes of mood. I say we, for besides me his most constant visitor was an easy-going Russian named Pegelov. This man had formerly been an acquaintance of Herder's in Riga, and now, although no longer a youth, he was trying to perfect himself in surgery under Lobstein's direction. Herder could be delightfully engaging and witty, but just as easily showed a bad-tempered side. Of course, this attracting and rejecting is what all humans do by nature, some more, some less, some in slower, some in quicker pulsations; few can really overcome their peculiarities in this regard, although many pretend to. In Herder's case, certainly the greater part of his contradictory, bitter, mordant disposition derived from his ailment and the suffering it caused him. This is a frequently occurring situation in life, and one does not take the moral effects of morbid conditions sufficiently into account. Therefore one judges many characters very unjustly, because one simply assumes that everybody is healthy and expects him to conduct himself accordingly.

During the whole time of this cure I visited Herder morning and evening; I also stayed whole days with him and before long accustomed myself all the more readily to his scolding and criticizing because I was learning daily to have more appreciation for his fine, great qualities, his extensive knowledge, and his profound insights. This good-natured blusterer had a great and significant influence on me. He was five years older than I, which makes quite a difference in one's younger days; and since I acknowledged him to be what he was and tried to appreciate what he had already accomplished, he inevitably assumed superiority over me. But it was not a comfortable situation. The older persons I had previously associated with had shown forbearance in their attempts to improve my mind, and had perhaps even spoiled me with their indulgence; from Herder, however, no word of approval was ever to be expected, however hard one tried to please him. Thus my great affection and respect for him on the one hand, and on the other the displeasure he made me feel, were constantly at odds; and so there arose within me an inner conflict of a kind I had never before felt in my life. Since his conversations were invariably significant, whatever he might ask, answer, or otherwise communicate, it was inevitable that he should advance me toward new points of view daily, nay, hourly. In Leipzig I had become accustomed to narrowly circumscribed conditions, and my situation in Frankfurt had not been conducive to the broadening of my general knowledge of German literature. Indeed those religious-mystical chemical pursuits had led me into dark regions, so that I was mostly a stranger to what had happened in the wide literary world for the last several years. Now, through Herder, I suddenly became ac-

quainted with all the new ventures and all the new directions these were apparently taking. He himself had already achieved ample fame and had placed himself with his *Fragments* and *Critical Forests*,¹⁶² and other things, directly alongside the most eminent men, those who had enjoyed the attention of the fatherland for some time. The turmoil that must have been in such a spirit, and the agitation in such a nature, can neither be grasped nor depicted. However, the aspirations locked up within him were certainly great, as must be readily admitted when one considers all the things he produced and accomplished for many years afterwards.

We had not lived together very long in this fashion when he confided to me that he intended to compete for the prize announced in Berlin for the best paper on the origin of languages.¹⁶³ His work was already approaching completion, and, since he wrote a very neat hand, he was soon able to provide me with a readable manuscript, in installments. I had never pondered such subjects, being too much caught up in the middle of things to give any thought to their beginning or end. Moreover the question struck me as somewhat idle, for if God had created the human being as a human being, language would have been bestowed on him just as his upright gait was; just as he could not help noticing at once that he could walk and grasp, so he would have perceived that his throat enabled him to sing, and that these tones could be further modified in various ways by the tongue, palate, and lips. If the human being was of divine origin, then language itself was too; and if the human being, seen in perspective with the rest of nature, was a natural being, then language was natural as well. Like soul and body, these were two things I could never separate. Süßmilch,¹⁶⁴ who for all his crude realism was still somewhat inclined to fantasy, had decided on the divine origin, namely, that God had played schoolmaster to the first humans. Herder's treatise was designed to show how man could, and had to, attain language by his own ability. I read the treatise with great pleasure and to my special benefit, but I was not far enough advanced either in knowledge or thinking power to offer a reasoned judgment of it. Therefore I indicated my approval to the author by appending a few comments that issued from my own way of looking at things. But he took them all up point for point, and I was scolded and censured, whether I had agreed conditionally or unconditionally. The portly surgeon had less patience than I: he jokingly refused to read the prize essay, asserting that he was not in the least constituted to think about such abstract matters. Instead, he strongly suggested a game of l'hombre, which was what we usually played together in the evening.

In spite of his bothersome and painful course of treatments, our good Herder lost none of his liveliness, which, however, became less and

less kindly. He could not write a note asking for something without spicing it with an insult of some sort. Thus, for example, he once wrote to me:

If the Brutus letters are with your Cicero letters,
 You, who from scholars' consolers, on well-hewn shelves in fine
 bindings,
 Find your consolation, but more from outside than inside,
 You, who stem from the gods, or from the Goths, or from goat-
 dung,
 Goethe, send them to me.

It was really not very refined of him to indulge in this mockery of my name. A man's own name is not, say, like a cloak, which merely hangs from his shoulders and can be pulled and tugged, if need be. Rather, it is a perfectly fitting garment, nay, it is grown tight to him all over, like his own skin, and one may not scrape and pare away at it without wounding the person himself.

On the other hand, his first reproach was not without basis. That is to say, the authors I had exchanged with Langer, and various fine editions from my father's collection as well, had accompanied me to Strassburg, where I set them up on a neatly kept bookshelf, with the best intentions of using them. But how could there be sufficient time for that, when I splintered it up in a hundred different activities? Herder, who needed books at every turn and therefore kept a sharp eye out for them, noticed my fine collection on his first visit, but also the fact that I never used it. For this reason he, being the arch enemy of all sham and ostentation, took every occasion to tease me about it.

Yet another mocking poem occurs to me, which he sent over one evening after I had told him a great deal about the Dresden gallery. Truly, I had not penetrated into the higher meaning of the Italian school, but Dominico Feti¹⁶⁵ had appealed to me very strongly since he was an excellent artist, even though a humorist and therefore not of the first rank. Religious subjects were obligatory; Feti chose the New Testament parables and enjoyed painting them, doing it with much originality, taste, and good humor. By this means he brought them in quite close touch with ordinary life, and what impressed me especially in his compositions were their lifelike details, which were at once ingenious and naive, and enhanced by bold brushwork. Herder mocked this childish artistic enthusiasm of mine as follows:

By empathy,
 One painter my fondness can claim,
 Dominico Feti's his name.
 In parodies of parables he's able

To make the Bible a fool's fable,
By empathy.—You foolish parable!

I could cite still other examples of such jests, which were more or less merry or abstruse, jolly or bitter. They did not anger me, but they made me uncomfortable. However, since I greatly appreciated any contribution to my cultural development, and had often before abandoned opinions and inclinations, I soon reconciled myself to these mis-sives and only tried to distinguish between just criticism and unjust invective, as much as I could possibly do this from my current standpoint. And so not a day passed that was not most profitable and educational for me.

I became acquainted with poetry from quite a different angle, in a different context from before, one that indeed had great appeal for me. Hebraic poetry (which Herder treated very ingeniously after the manner of his precursor Lowth¹⁶⁶), folk poetry (whose tradition in Alsace he prompted us to investigate), and the poetic nature of the oldest documents bore witness that poetry is truly a gift given to the world and all nations, and is not the private heritage of a few distinguished, cultivated men. I devoured all that, and the more eager I was to receive, the more generously he gave, and we spent some extremely interesting hours together. I tried to continue the other, the scientific, studies I had begun, and since there is always enough time if one employs it well, I succeeded now and then in doing double or triple work. Regarding the fullness of those few weeks we spent together I can safely say that all the works Herder eventually produced were suggested here in embryo, and this placed me in the fortunate situation of being able to extend, complete, and link with more important matters everything I had previously thought, learned, and assimilated. If Herder had been more methodical, I would have found the finest guidance toward a permanent alignment of my cultural development; but he was more inclined to test and stimulate than to lead and direct. Thus he was the first to acquaint me with Hamann's¹⁶⁷ writings, which he set great store by. However, instead of instructing me in them and explaining the bent and workings of this extraordinary mind, he usually merely found it amusing when I made some no doubt very odd attempts to understand these sibylline pages. But I nevertheless felt that something in Hamann's writings appealed to me, and I yielded to it without knowing whence it came or whither it led.

The cure was taking longer than it should have, whereupon Lobstein began to waver in his treatment and to repeat himself, so that the affair seemed endless. Moreover Pegelov had already told me confidentially that there was little hope for good results; so the whole situation darkened. Herder grew impatient and out of humor. He could not manage

to continue his activities as before, and had to limit them even more because blame for the unsuccessful surgical procedure began to be laid on Herder's excessive intellectual exertions and his constant, lively, nay, frolicsome association with us. Suffice it to say that, after so much torment and suffering, the artificial lachrymal duct refused to form, and the planned communication did not occur. In order not to aggravate the misfortune, it became necessary to let the wound heal. However admirable Herder's steadfastness during the very painful operation had been, there was something truly sublime about his melancholy, even grim resignation to the thought of bearing this defect for the rest of his life. Indeed it earned him the permanent respect of those who looked on and loved him. This disorder marring his distinguished countenance naturally vexed him even more since he had met and won the affection of an excellent young woman in Darmstadt. Apparently this had been his main reason for subjecting himself to the cure. He had wanted to return as a freer, happier, handsomer person to the girl to whom he was half-betrothed and make her a more definite, more inviolable commitment. Nevertheless, he made haste to leave Strassburg as soon as possible, and because his sojourn up to now had been as costly as it was unpleasant, I borrowed a sum of money for him which he promised to repay at a specified date. The time expired, and the money did not arrive. Although my creditor did not dun me, I had several weeks of embarrassment. Finally, letter and money arrived, and at this juncture too he remained true to form, for instead of thanks and an apology, he had written nothing but mocking verses in doggerel, which would either have confused or alienated anyone else; but I was not bothered at all, since I had conceived such a great and powerful impression of his merit that it obliterated anything disagreeable that would have been detrimental to him.

Yet one should never speak of one's own or some one else's defects, at least not publicly, unless one expects to accomplish something useful thereby. Consequently I want to include certain pressing remarks at this point.

Gratitude and ingratitude are among those events in the moral sphere which occur every moment and continually upset mutual human relationships. I customarily make a distinction between lack of gratitude, ingratitude, and an antipathy to thanking. The first of these is innate in man, indeed was created with him, for it results from his happy, frivolous way of forgetting both what is pleasant and unpleasant, which is really all that makes it possible to continue living. A human being needs so infinitely many pre- and co-conditions for a tolerable existence that, if he were always to express due thanks to the sun and the earth, to God and nature, to forefathers and parents, to friends and comrades, he would have neither enough time nor feeling left to receive and enjoy

new benefits. Of course, if natural man allows that frivolity to proceed unchecked, then cold indifference will take over more and more, until at last one's benefactor is looked upon as a stranger, and one might even go so far as to undertake something injurious to him, if there were profit in it. Only this can really be termed ingratitude; it is a product of the brutal state into which uncultivated nature inevitably sinks in the end. Antipathy to thanking, however, or repayment of a benefit with a show of bad temper and annoyance, is very rare and is found only in excellent people who realize their great potential but have been born to a low station or are without the means of helping themselves. From childhood on, they have to push their way through, step by step, and to accept help and support from any source, something which may be made bitter and repulsive for them by the heavy-handedness of some benefactors. What they receive is mundane, while, on the other hand, what they accomplish is of a higher order, for which no genuine compensation is imaginable. Lessing, who in his prime was gifted with a clear perspective on earthly things, once expressed himself bluntly but clearly on this subject. In contrast to this, Herder continually spoiled the finest days for himself and others because in later years he was unable to use his intellectual powers to moderate the bad temper that had inevitably afflicted him in his youth.

Certainly one can demand this much of oneself. For reason, nature's light, which is ever actively clarifying a man's situation to him, can be of friendly service to him in his cultural development as well. And, generally speaking, in many matters relating to moral culture, defects should not be taken too seriously, nor should one look around for particularly severe and uncommon remedies, for certain imperfections can be eliminated easily, indeed effortlessly. Thus, for example, we can arouse gratitude in ourselves, keep it alive, and even make it a need, through mere habit.

In an attempt at biography it is surely appropriate to speak of oneself. By nature, I am as ungrateful as anyone else, and vehement feelings caused by momentary unfriendly relations very easily made me forget benefits received and misled me into ingratitude.

To counteract this, I trained myself first of all to enjoy remembering how I came into possession of all the things I own and from whom I received them, whether as gifts, by exchange, purchase, or some other way. When displaying my collections I have made it a custom to keep in mind the persons who were instrumental in procuring the individual items for me, and even to take into account the occasion, the coincidence, the remotest prompting and assistance that led to my acquisition of things dear and valuable to me. By this means, our surroundings come alive, we see things in their spiritual, loving, genetic relationships, our present existence is enhanced and enriched by recollections of past

conditions, and the authors of the gifts emerge again and again before the imagination, combined with pleasant memories. This makes ingratitude impossible and reciprocation easy and desirable, when the opportunity arises. Simultaneously, one is led to the contemplation of higher goods that are beyond physical possession, and it is most pleasant to review whence they have come and from when they date.

Before I turn away my gaze from that relationship with Herder which was so significant and consequential for me, there are still a few things to add. It was only natural that I gradually became more and more reticent about telling Herder what had previously contributed to my cultural development, and especially about things that still seriously occupied my mind at the moment. He had spoiled my pleasure in so many things that I had formerly liked, and had been particularly stern in his censure of my delight in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. It did not matter how I tried to defend my favorite author. I could say that nothing was more welcome to youthful fancy than a sojourn in those splendid, happy regions with gods and demi-gods, as a witness to their deeds and loves. I could go into detail about that serious man's statement (quoted at the beginning of this book) and confirm it from my own experience: he would not accept any of that. He said there was no genuine, literal truth to be found in these poems, that neither Greece nor Italy was in them, neither a primitive nor a cultivated world. Rather, it was all imitation of already existent material and an artificial depiction, which is as much as can be expected from an overcultivated person. And then when I finally tried to make the point that the productions of an excellent individual are surely nature also, and that in all nations, both ancient and modern, only poets had been poets, then Herder would absolutely not grant me this. I had to endure a great deal on this account, indeed it almost spoiled my Ovid for me, since there is no fondness, no habit, so strong that it can hold out indefinitely against the diatribes of excellent people whom one trusts. Something always adheres, and a love which is no longer unconditional is already in a precarious state.

I took great care to conceal from him my interest in certain subjects which had rooted themselves in me and seemed to be developing gradually into poetic form. These were Götz von Berlichingen and Faust. The former's account of his life had gripped my inmost being. The image of this rough, well-intentioned, independent man living at a time of wild anarchy aroused my deepest interest. As to the other, the significant puppet play about him resounded and hummed within me in many tonal variations. I too had dabbled in all knowledge and had quite soon discovered the futility of this. I too had tried all sorts of things in life only to abandon them in ever greater discontent and torment. These and many other matters I now had constantly in mind, and took delight in them in lonely hours, without, however, writing

anything down. But most of all I concealed my mystic-cabalistic chemistry, and everything connected with it, from Herder, although I still liked to study it in secret and develop it more logically than it had been transmitted to me. Of my poetic works, I believe I submitted *The Accomplices* to him, but I do not remember receiving any criticism or encouragement from him concerning it. But in spite of all this he remained what he was: whatever proceeded from him was effective and significant, even if not pleasant; indeed even his handwriting exerted a magical power over me. I do not remember ever having torn up or discarded any of his letters, or so much as an envelope with his handwriting. Yet I do not have one document left from those wonderful, portentous, happy days, because there have been so many changes of time and place.

I would make scant mention of the fact that Herder's power of attraction affected others beside me, were it not necessary to note that it had a particularly strong effect on Jung, called Stilling. This man's faithful, honest efforts could not fail to interest a person of any feeling, nor his receptivity fail to open the lips of anyone capable of communicating something. Herder too behaved more considerately toward him than toward the rest of us, for he always seemed to react in proportion to the effect made on himself. Jung's limited perceptions were accompanied by so much good will, and his importunities by so much gentle gravity, that certainly no reasonable person could be harsh to him, nor could a kindly person deride or make fun of him. Besides, Jung was so greatly stimulated by Herder that he felt invigorated and encouraged in all his activities, nay, his affection for me seemed to abate proportionately; but we still remained good comrades, got along with each other as well as before, and performed the friendliest services for one another.

However, let us now forsake our friend's sickroom and these general observations, which are more indicative of spiritual illness than health. Let us betake ourselves into the open air, onto the high, broad balcony of the cathedral, as if it were still the time when we young fellows arranged frequent meetings there in the evening to salute the sinking sun with rummers filled with wine. All conversation would cease here in contemplation of the region, but we would test the sharpness of our vision as each one strove to perceive the most distant objects, indeed to distinguish them clearly. We were aided by good telescopes, and one friend after the other would point out the exact spot which had won his special love and esteem. I was not without a little spot of that kind either, and although it did not stand out significantly in the landscape, its lovely charm attracted me more than anything else. On such occasions, one's imagination would be stirred by hearing stories, and many a little journey would be planned, indeed spontaneously under-

taken. I shall give a detailed account of one trip among many, since it was full of consequence for me in numerous respects.

With two valued friends and table companions, Engelbach¹⁶⁸ and Weyland,¹⁶⁹ both natives of Lower Alsace, I went on horseback to Saverne. The weather was good, and the friendly little town seemed to smile at us very pleasantly. The sight of its episcopal palace aroused our admiration. A new stable's vast extent, size, and splendor was an indication of the owner's further opulence. The magnificence of the staircase astonished us, and we entered the rooms and halls with awe; however, the person of the cardinal, whom we saw dining, was in contrast to all this, for he was a shrunken little man. The view into the garden is splendid, and a canal some two miles long, directed straight toward the middle of the palace, fills one with great respect for the ability and vision of the former owners. We strolled back and forth alongside it and enjoyed many sections of this well-situated complex at the end of the magnificent Alsatian plain, at the foot of the Vosges mountains.

After taking our pleasure in this ecclesiastical outpost of a monarchy and diverting ourselves in the area, we proceeded the next morning to a public work which provides a most worthy entrance into a mighty kingdom. Bathed in the light of the day's new sun, the famous Saverne Rise loomed before us, a product of almost unimaginable toil. Curving like a serpent and built up over the most fearful cliffs, a highway broad enough for three carriages driving abreast leads uphill so gently that one scarcely feels it. The smooth, hard roadway, the flagstone-paved elevations on both sides for pedestrians, the stone gutters for draining off the mountain waters—everything is arranged so neatly, artistically, and durably that it is a delight to the eye. So one arrives by degrees at Phalsbourg, a modern fortress. It is situated on a medium-sized hill, and the fortifications are elegantly constructed of the same stone as the blackish cliffs below them, while the seams, being outlined with white chalk, exactly designate the size of the ashlar and are a striking proof of the neatness of the work. We found the town itself to be regular and built of stone, as befits a fortress, and the church to be in good taste. As we strolled through the streets—it was nine o'clock Sunday morning—we heard music: people were already waltzing to their heart's content at the inn. Seeing that the inhabitants did not let themselves be kept from their pleasures by the great scarcity, nay, the threatening famine, we too did not allow our youthful gaiety to be dampened at all when the baker refused us bread to take along on our trip and directed us to the inn, where, if need be, we could devour it on the spot.

We were very happy to ride horseback down the Rise again, so that we might gaze in amazement a second time at this engineering marvel and enjoy again the refreshing view over Alsace. We soon got to Bisch-

willer, where our friend Weyland had arranged a good reception for us. Small-town conditions are very congenial to fresh, youthful minds: the family relationships are closer and more evident; the affairs of the household, which are alternately, but not too strenuously, devoted to minor official business, community industry, and the cultivation of fields and gardens, invite our friendly participation. Sociability is required; and the stranger finds it very pleasant to be in this limited sphere, unless the dissensions of the inhabitants, being more in evidence in such places, affect him in some way. This little town was the main one in the county of Hanau-Lichtenberg, domain of the Landgrave of Darmstadt under French sovereignty. The government and chamber located there made the town the significant center of a very fine and desirable princely possession. We quickly forgot the dissimilar streets and irregular architecture of the town when we stepped out of it to view the old castle and the gardens, which are superbly laid out on a hillside. Various little ornamental groves, a preserve for tame pheasants and another for wild ones, and the remains of many similar undertakings showed how pleasant this little princely residence must formerly have been.

But all these sights were surpassed by the view overlooking an altogether paradisiacal region from the nearby mount called the Bastberg. This elevation, since it is composed completely of a heap of various kinds of shells, brought such prehistorical documents to my attention for the first time; I had never before seen them together in such great masses. But soon my curious glance turned from this and rested exclusively on the region. One stands on the last promontory facing the land. Toward the north lies a fertile plain interspersed with little wooded patches, bordered by an austere mountain range that extends westward to Saverne, where one can clearly make out the episcopal palace and, situated about an hour's walk away from it, the Abbey of St. John. From there the eye follows the Vosges chain as it dwindles away southwards. Turning northeast, one sees Castle Lichtenberg on a cliff, and toward the southeast one has the endless Alsatian plain to explore as it recedes from view in ever mistier lowlands, until at last the Swabian mountains blend like shadows with the horizon.

My few excursions into the world had already made me aware of how much it can mean to the traveler to inquire about the directions in which the streams flow, and to ask about the ultimate course of even the smallest brook. In this manner he can attain a comprehensive view of every river system that surrounds him at the moment, as well as a concept of the mutual relationships between the high and low places. These clues assist both contemplation and memory and are the surest means of disentangling oneself from the geological and political maze of countries. While engaged in these observations I took my solemn leave of dear Alsace, since we intended the next morning to turn toward Lorraine.

The evening passed in intimate conversation, as we tried to console ourselves about the cheerless present with reminiscences from a better past. Here, as in the entire little country, the name most highly regarded of all was that of the last Count Reinhard of Hanau,¹⁷⁰ whose great intelligence and ability were evident in all his actions, and many a fine monument of his existence still survived. Such men have the privilege of being benefactors doubly, once for the present, to which they bring happiness, and again for the future, nourishing and sustaining its feeling and courage.

As we now turned northwestwards into the mountains and passed by the Lützelstein, an old castle lying high up in very hilly terrain, then descended into the region of the Saar and Moselle, the sky grew overcast, as though to underscore for us the more rugged conditions in the western realm. The valley of the Saar, where we encountered first the small town of Bockenheimer and then caught sight of solidly built Neusaarwerden across from it, with a palatial country seat, is bordered on both sides by mountains that could be called dreary, except for the endless succession of pastures and meadows, called the High Mead, that stretches at their feet as far as Sarralbe and much beyond, farther than the eye can reach. Here one's gaze is drawn to some large buildings of a former stud farm belonging to the dukes of Lorraine. These presently serve as a dairy, being, to be sure, very well situated for that purpose. We went by way of Sarreguemines to Saarbrücken, finding this small princely capital to be a bright spot in an otherwise very rocky, wooded countryside. The town, though small and hilly, had been much beautified by the last prince, and it made a pleasant impression at once because its houses are painted uniformly grayish-white and their different heights provide a varied view. In the center, on a beautiful square bounded by handsome buildings, stands the Lutheran church, which is on a small scale that corresponds to its surroundings. The façade of the palace is on the same level with the rest of the town, whereas the rear follows the slope of a steep cliff. Not only has the latter been cut into terraces, to facilitate access to the valley, but also, at the bottom, an oblong-rectangular garden area has been created by means of diverting the river on one side and grinding away the cliff on the other, filling the whole space in with earth, and planting it. This was undertaken at a time when architects were consulted about laying out gardens, as today one depends on the eye of the landscape painter. The entire furnishings of the palace, their costliness and pleasing appearance, their richness and delicacy, bespoke an owner who enjoyed life, which had been the case with the deceased prince; the present prince was not in residence. President von Günderode¹⁷¹ received us most courteously and for three days entertained us better than we had any reason to expect. I used the various acquaintances we made to get information about many things. The pleasure-filled life of the previous prince yielded plenty of material for conversation, as did the manifold arrangements he had made

to profit from the advantages offered him by the nature of his country. This marked my real initiation into the study of mountainous regions, and here my desire to observe economic and technological matters was first aroused—things which have occupied me for the greater part of my life. We heard about the rich bituminous coal mines of Dudweiler, of iron and alum works, indeed even about a burning hill, and we made ready to get a close view of these wonders.

Then we proceeded through forested mountains, which cannot but seem desolate and dreary to anyone who comes from a splendid, fertile land since their only attraction consists in their inner contents. In short succession we became acquainted with a simple and then a complicated machine works, that is, with a forge for making scythes and a wire-drawing mill. If the former pleases merely by being a substitute for human hands, the latter demands the greatest admiration because it operates in a higher organic sense, hardly different from intelligence and consciousness. In the alum works we inquired in detail about how this very necessary material is extracted and refined. When we noticed great heaps of a white, greasy, spongy, earthy substance and asked about its use, the workmen smiled and answered that it was foam thrown off during the boiling of the alum. Mr. Stauf¹⁷² had it collected because he hoped it would also be usable.—“Is Mr. Stauf still alive?” exclaimed my companion, in amazement. They affirmed this and assured us that, according to our itinerary, we would be passing quite near his lonely dwelling.

Our path now went up along the conduits through which the alum water is brought down, and past the foremost tunnel, called the Land Pit, which produces the famous Dudweiler coal. When dry, lumps of this coal have the blue color of darkly tarnished steel, and a very pretty iridescence plays across the surface at every movement. We could afford to shun the dark mouths of the tunnels, however, since their contents already lay spilled out around us in abundance. Next we approached the open pits in which the roasted alum shale is washed in lye; and right afterwards, even though prepared for it, we were astonished by a strange occurrence. We stepped into a ravine and found ourselves in the region of the burning hill. We were enveloped by a strong smell of sulphur; one side of the hollow was well-nigh glowing, and was covered with reddish, bleached stone; thick smoke rose up from the fissures, and even through our heavy soles we could feel the heat of the ground. This chance phenomenon (for it is not known how the stretch was ignited) greatly facilitates the manufacture of alum, because the shale composing the surface layer of the hill lies there thoroughly roasted, and simply needs to be washed in lye. The ravine was wholly the result of the gradual removal and consumption of the calcined shale. We clambered out from these depths and were on the crest of

the hill. A pleasant beech wood girdled the flat area adjacent to the hollow and spread out on both sides of it. Several trees standing there were already withered, others were fading, and next to them were some that were still quite fresh and without presentiment of the approaching fire that was menacing their roots.

In the open area various fissures were smoking, while others had ceased to do so, for the fire had been glimmering some ten years through the old choked tunnels and shafts which honeycomb the hill. It might even have penetrated through crevices into untouched coal deposits, for when they were trying to follow up significant indications of plentiful coal several hundred paces deeper into the woods, they did not get very far before heavy smoke surged toward the workmen and drove them away. They filled the opening in again, but we found the spot still smoking when we went past it on the way to our chemist's solitary dwelling. This is situated among mountains and woods, just at the point where the valleys curve pleasantly in many directions. The soil round about is black and coal-like, and the deposits frequently come up to the surface. A coal philosopher—*philosophus per ignem*, as one used to say—could not have found a more suitable place to settle.

We stepped up to a small, tolerably livable house and found Mr. Stauf, who recognized my friend immediately and received him with laments about the new government. Indeed we gathered from his statements that the alum works, like many another well-conceived enterprise, was not meeting its expenses because of external and perhaps also internal circumstances—and more of the same. He was one of the chemists of that time who were thoroughly convinced that much could be accomplished with natural products; but they wasted their time in contemplation of abstruse details and trifles and did not have adequate knowledge for accomplishing anything that would yield economic and mercantile advantages. Accordingly, whatever profit he expected to get from that foam lay far in the future, and all he had to show was a cake of sal ammoniac supplied him by the burning hill.

More than happy to find a human ear to hear his laments, the gaunt, decrepit little man, in one shoe and one slipper, and in drooping stockings that he pulled up repeatedly in vain, dragged himself up the hill where the resin kiln stood. He had erected it himself, but now, to his acute distress, had to see it in ruins. Here there was a connected series of furnaces where coal was to be desulphurated and made suitable for use in iron works; but simultaneously oil and resin were to be made usable, and even the soot was not to be left out, and so everything failed because of the many objectives. During the lifetime of the former prince, the business had been run on hope, as an avocation; now there were inquiries about its direct returns, and none could be shown.

Leaving our expert to his solitude, we hurried—for it had already

grown late—to the Friedrichstal glass works, where we became acquainted in passing with one of the most important and marvelous activities of human artistry.

But what interested us young fellows almost more than these significant experiences was a number of merry adventures and a surprising display of fireworks, at nightfall, not far from Neukirch. Just as several nights before, on the banks of the Saar, sparkling clouds of glowworms had hovered about us amid rock and bush, so now the spark-throwing forges wafted their merry pyrotechnics in our direction. In the dark of the night we entered the foundries located on the valley floor and were intrigued by the strange semi-darkness of these caves made of planks, which were only meagerly illuminated by a slight aperture in the glowing furnaces. We were finally driven off by the noise of the water and the bellows that it works, by the fearful roaring and whistling of the air-stream, which deafens one's ears and confuses one's senses as it rages into the molten ore. We put up for the night at Neukirch, which is built on the mountainside.

But in spite of all the variety and commotion of the day I still could not find any rest. I left my friend to his happy sleep and sought out the hunting lodge, which is situated up higher. It has a view far over mountain and forest, but I could only distinguish their outlines against the bright nocturnal sky, while their sides and depths were impervious to my gaze. The well-kept building stood not only alone but empty: no steward, no gamekeeper, was to be found. I sat in front of the great glass doors, on the steps that encircle the whole terrace. Here, in the midst of the mountains, below me a dark earth covered with woods and looking even darker against the bright horizon of a summer night, and above me the vault of burning stars, I sat by myself for a long time and thought, in this forsaken spot, that I had never felt such solitude. How pleasantly I was surprised, therefore, to hear in the distance the sound of some hunting horns, which suddenly enlivened the quiet atmosphere like the fragrance of balsam. Then there awoke in me the image of a lovely creature that had been relegated to the background by the motley impressions of these days of travel. It revealed itself more and more clearly and drove me from my perch back to the inn, where I made arrangements for a very early morning departure.

The way back was used differently from the way out. Thus it was that we hastened through Zweibrücken, which would surely have also merited our attention as a beautiful and noteworthy princely capital. We merely glanced at the large but plain palace, at the extensive esplanades planted at regular intervals with linden trees and well suited to the training of horses for the hunt, at the great stables, and at the middle-class houses which the prince had built to be raffled off. All of this, as well as the dress and behavior of the inhabitants, especially of

the women and girls, indicated their connection with something far off, and illustrated that relationship to Paris which the whole trans-Rhine territory for quite some time had found inescapable. We also went outside the town to visit the ducal wine cellars, which are extensive and equipped with large, artistically made barrels. We went on farther and found the countryside to be much like that around Saarbrücken: just a few villages amidst wild and rugged mountains. One learns not to look for fields of grain here. With the Horn brook beside us, we ascended to Bitche, which is located at the significant spot where the waters divide, one part flowing down to the Saar, the other to the Rhine. The latter would soon draw us downhill after them. Yet we could not neglect to visit the little town of Bitche, which clings very picturesquely to a mountain, nor the fortress situated above it. The latter is partly built on top of a cliff, and partly hewn into the cliff. Its subterranean areas are particularly noteworthy, for they are not only spacious enough to house a multitude of people and cattle, but one even finds in them great vaulted rooms for drilling troops, a mill, a chapel, and whatever else might be required underground when the earth's surface is in turmoil.

Next we followed the down-rushing brooks through the Vale of Bears. The dense woods on both sides of it are unworked. Here trunks by the thousands have fallen down over each other and are rotting, while young sprouts germinate in immense numbers on their half-decayed ancestors. Conversations with a few fellow walkers brought to our notice again the name von Dietrich,¹⁷³ which we had already often heard mentioned honorably in these forest regions. The accomplishments and skill of this man, his wealth and his use and application of it, all seemed to be well balanced. He could justly delight in his gains while increasing them, and enjoy what he had earned while securing it. The more I saw of the world, the happier I was to hear not just the universally famous names, but more especially those which were mentioned with love and respect in individual regions. Thus also in this case, after a little inquiry I found out very easily that von Dietrich had been the first who understood how to exploit the mountains' treasures—their iron, coal, and wood—successfully, and had worked his way up to an ever-greater prosperity.

Niederbronn, where we arrived next, was another testimony to that. He had bought this small town from the counts of Leiningen and other part owners, in order to establish some significant ironworks in the area.

Here in these baths, which had already been laid out by the Romans, I felt immersed in the spirit of antiquity, whose venerable ruins, oddly enough, gleamed at me everywhere from among the confusion of agricultural implements in farmyards, in the form of fragmented bas-reliefs and inscriptions, and capitals and shafts of columns.

So it was with reverence that I saw, when we climbed up to the nearby Wissembourg castle, on the great mass of rock which forms the base of one of its sides, a well-preserved inscription declaring a vow of gratitude to Mercury. The castle itself stands on the last height between Bitche and the open country. It consists of the ruins of a German castle built on Roman remains. From its tower we surveyed the whole of Alsace a second time, and the cathedral's clearly visible spire marked the location of Strassburg. First, however, was spread out before us the great forest of Haguenau, and the towers of this town jutted up behind it very distinctly. I was drawn to that point. We rode horseback through Reichshofen, where von Dietrich had erected a significant palace for himself. After we had gazed, from the hills near Niedermodern, at the pleasant course of the little Moder river as it passes the Haguenau woods, I left my friend behind at a ridiculous coal mine inspection (which at Dudweiler, to be sure, would have been more serious) and rode through Haguenau to my beloved Sesenheim, taking short cuts which in themselves indicated to me my affection.

All those views of a wild, mountainous region, and then those of a bright, fertile, happy land had failed to captivate my inner eye, which was fastened on an amiable and attractive object. This time too, the trip back held greater charm for me than the trip out, because it brought me close again to a young woman to whom I was deeply attached and who deserved respect as well as love. However, before I lead my friends to her rustic abode, let it be granted me to mention a circumstance which did much to kindle my affection and to enhance the satisfaction it afforded me.

One can conclude from my style of life in Frankfurt and the studies I had pursued there how far behind I must have been in reading recent literature, and my sojourn in Strassburg could not advance me with this. Then Herder arrived, and, in addition to his great knowledge, he brought along many aids to understanding and, besides, some of the more recent publications. Among these, he proclaimed to us that *The Vicar of Wakefield* was an excellent work, and he intended to acquaint us with the German translation by reading it aloud to us himself.

He had his own manner of reading; whoever has heard him preach will be able to imagine it. His delivery was always serious and straightforward, and that is how it was with this novel too. He completely abstained from any sort of dramatic-mimetic presentation and even avoided the diversity that is not only permissible in epic declamation but actually required: a slight variation of tone when different personages speak, to set off what each one says and to separate the actors from the narrator. While not monotonous, Herder used only one tone for the whole succession of events, just as if everything were historical and nothing in the present, as if the shades of these poetic beings were

but gently gliding past him, not vividly acting in front of him. Yet from his lips this kind of delivery had an infinite charm: he felt everything very profoundly and was able to appreciate the manifold features of such a work, and therefore the total merit of a literary product could emerge in its purity, and all the more distinctly because one was not distracted by strongly accentuated details which might destroy the mood that the work in its entirety was meant to impart.

A Protestant country parson is perhaps the finest subject for a modern idyll. Like Melchizedek, he appears as priest and king in one person. Usually he is linked by identical occupation and family situation to the most innocent calling imaginable on earth, that of husbandman. He is father, householder, and farmer, and thus a full member of the community. It is on this pure, lovely, earthly basis that his higher calling rests. He is entrusted with preparing his people for life, with caring for their spiritual education, with blessing them at all the critical stages of their existence, with teaching, strengthening, and consoling them, and, if consolation for the present is not enough, with arousing and guaranteeing hope for a better future. Imagine such a man with unalloyed human sentiments, strong enough to maintain them under any circumstances, and by this very fact raised above the throng, of whom purity and constancy can hardly be expected. Let him be given the requisite knowledge for his office, and a cheerful, steady, even passionate activeness which lets no moment go by without doing good—and one will have equipped him well. At the same time, however, add the necessary limitations, and let him not only remain in a small sphere, but possibly exchange it for one even smaller. Bestow on him a good nature, a conciliatory spirit, staunchness, and all the other praiseworthy qualities that spring from a superlative character, and in addition to all this, cheerful tractability and a smiling tolerance of his own and others' defects: then one has fairly well completed the picture of our excellent Wakefield.

Because this character is shown moving through the joys and sorrows of life, and because the story becomes increasingly interesting through the combination of what is quite natural with what is strange and rare, this novel is among the best ever written. Moreover it has the great merit of being altogether moral, indeed Christian in the pure sense of the term. It depicts the reward given to good will and perseverance in rectitude, upholds an unconditional trust in God, and attests to the eventual triumph of good over evil—and all this without a trace of sanctimoniousness or pedantry. From both of these the author was saved by his magnanimity, which manifests itself in pervasive irony, so that this little work must strike us as not only wise but amiable. Unquestionably the author, Doctor Goldsmith, has great insight into the moral world with its virtues and frailties; but let him also acknowl-

edge with gratitude that he is an Englishman and give a great deal of credit to the advantages held out to him by his country, his nation. The family he is describing stands on one of the lowest levels of middle-class prosperity, and yet it comes into contact with the highest personages; its narrow sphere, which grows even narrower, still interlocks, through the natural course of affairs in middle-class society, with the great world. Its little craft floats on the full and heaving wave of English life, and in weal and woe it can expect either injury or assistance from the mighty fleet that is sailing around it.

I can assume that my readers know this work and remember it. If someone is hearing it mentioned for the first time, or if someone is being prompted to read it again, both will be grateful to me. For the former I shall remark just in passing that the parson's wife is one of those kind, energetic women who let themselves and their families lack for nothing, but are nevertheless somewhat conceited about themselves and theirs. Of the two daughters, Olivia is pretty and more outgoing, Sophia charming and more reserved; and I shall not omit to name an industrious, somewhat gruff son Moses, who tries hard to emulate his father.

If Herder could be accused of any fault in his reading, then it was impatience: he would not wait for his listeners to understand and digest a certain part of the story, so as to be able to have the right feelings and appropriate thoughts about it. He was overhasty in wanting to see immediate reactions, and yet he would be dissatisfied with them when they did occur. He criticized the excessive emotion that surged up more strongly in me with every step. I had the feelings of a human being, a young human being; to me it all seemed living, true, present. He, of course, who only considered form and substance, plainly saw that I was being overwhelmed by the subject matter, and this he would not permit. Next, Pegelov's observations, which were not the most astute, got an even worse reception from him. He was particularly irritated by our lack of perspicacity, the fact that we did not foresee the contrasts often used by the author, but let ourselves be moved and enraptured without noticing how frequently the same technique was being repeated. We were not excused for failing to realize, or at least surmise, from the very outset that Burchell is himself the "lord" of whom he speaks, a fact he comes close to betraying when in his narrative he shifts out of the third person into the first. For at the end, when we childishly rejoiced because the poor, wretched wanderer drops his mask and is transformed into a wealthy, powerful nobleman, Herder reminded us of the passage where we had allowed the author to dupe us, and we were given a very severe lecture on our obtuseness. It can be seen from this that he viewed the work only as an artistic product and required us to do the same, although we were still at the stage of de-

velopment where works of art may surely be permitted to affect one as though they were products of nature.

I did not allow Herder's invective to daunt me in the least. Young people, by good or ill fortune, have to assimilate by themselves the effect of anything that has really stirred them; and this can lead to many good things as well as cause much mischief. The work under discussion had made a great and lasting impression on me, which I could not explain to myself. But I felt that I was actually in agreement with the ironic frame of mind that rises above things, above fortune and misfortune, good and evil, life and death, and thus comes into possession of a genuinely poetic world. To be sure, I was not really conscious of this until later; suffice it to say that for the moment I had much to think about. But by no means did I expect to be transferred so soon from this fictitious world into a similar real one.

My table mate Weyland, who brightened his life of quiet industry by dropping in from time to time on friends and relatives in the region (he was a native Alsatian), was of great help to me on my little excursions because he introduced me, sometimes personally, sometimes by recommendation, into various villages and families. He had often spoken to me about a country parson¹⁷⁴ who lived in the vicinity of Drusenheim, six hours from Strassburg, and had a good parish, a sensible wife, and a couple of amiable daughters. This would always be accompanied by high praise for the hospitality and charm of the household. It was more than enough to entice a young cavalier who had become accustomed to spending all his leisure days and hours on horseback in the open air. Therefore we resolved to take this outing too, but my friend had to promise he would make the introduction without saying either good or ill about me, treat me, on the whole, indifferently, and even permit me to come dressed, if not badly, still rather shabbily and carelessly. He agreed, thinking he himself might get some fun out of this.

In people of significance, it is a pardonable whim occasionally to conceal the outward signs of their superior position so as to give their own inner human merit a chance to operate the more independently. For this reason the incognito of princes, and the adventures arising from it, always have great appeal. Deities appear in disguise, and then they may rate all the good deeds done to them twice as highly; in this situation they can either take unpleasant experiences lightly or avoid them. It is quite in keeping with their natures, when Jupiter takes pleasure in his incognito with Philemon and Baucis, or Henry IV with his peasants, after a hunting party; and this is attractive to us. But when an insignificant, unrenowned young person takes it into his head to get some amusement out of being incognito, some people might interpret this as unpardonable arrogance. However, since the present discussion is not about how praise- or blameworthy his actions and sentiments

are, but about how they occur and are revealed, let us just this once, for the sake of our own entertainment, excuse the young man's conceitedness. Moreover I must point out that it was my serious father himself who aroused in me from childhood on a desire to disguise myself.

This time too, partly with some of my own older clothes, partly with some borrowed ones, and with the way I combed my hair, if I had not disfigured myself, at least I had dressed up so oddly that my friend could not refrain from laughing as we went on our way, especially when I gave a perfect imitation of the attitude and gestures on horseback of those figures called "Latin-scholar equestrians." The fine highway, the splendid weather, and our nearness to the Rhine put us into an excellent humor. We stopped for a moment in Drusenheim, he to spruce up, I to get back into my role, which I fear I was occasionally falling out of. The region roundabout has the wide-open, flat Alsatian character. We rode through meadows on a pleasant footpath, soon arrived at Sesenheim, left our horses at the inn, and walked nonchalantly toward the parsonage.—"Do not be put off," said Weyland, pointing out the house from afar, "because it looks like a dilapidated old farmhouse. Inside, it is that much newer." We stepped into the courtyard, and I was well pleased with the whole place, for it had precisely the quality called picturesqueness and all the magical appeal that I found in Dutch art. Time's effect, which extends to all human works, was unmistakably visible. House and barn had reached exactly that point of decay where one does not know whether to repair or rebuild, and through indecision neglects to do the former without being able to get around to the latter.

Everything was quiet and deserted, the courtyard as well as the village. We found the father, a small, retiring, and yet friendly man, all alone, for his family was out in the field. He bade us welcome, and offered us some refreshment, which we declined. My friend hurried away to look for the girls, and I stayed alone with our host.—"Perhaps you are surprised," he said, "to find me, with my remunerative position, so poorly housed in this rich village. That is the result, however," he continued, "of indecision. For a long time I have had the promise of the congregation, and even of the higher church officials, that the house is to be rebuilt. Several plans have already been drafted, examined, and altered; not one has been totally rejected, and not one has been put into execution. It has taken so many years that I can hardly contain my impatience."—I replied with what I considered the proper words for sustaining his hopes and for encouraging him to pursue the matter more energetically. Thereupon he trustingly proceeded to describe the persons on whom such things depended, and although he was not especially good at sketching characters, I could nevertheless comprehend quite well why the whole affair had inevitably come to a standstill.

There was something unique about the man's willingness to confide. He spoke to me as if he had known me for ten years, and yet there was nothing in his look to make me suppose he had paid any particular attention to me. Finally my friend walked in with the mother. She seemed to regard me with quite a different eye. Her face had regular features, and her expression was intelligent; no doubt she had been pretty in her youth. Her figure was tall and thin, but not thinner than was suitable for her years. From the back she still had a very pleasant, youthful appearance. Next the elder daughter came dashing in, full of life. She asked about Frederica, just as the two others had also asked. The father declared he had not seen her since the three of them had left together. The daughter went out the door again to look for her sister. The mother brought us some refreshments, and Weyland continued his conversation with her and her husband. This was exclusively about circumstances and individuals known to them, as is usually the case when acquaintances meet again after an interval, making inquiries about the members of a large circle and mutually giving reports. I listened and so discovered how much promise this social group held for me.

The elder daughter came hurriedly back into the room, uneasy because she had not found her sister. They were worried and blamed this or that bad habit of hers, but the father said quite calmly, "Just let her alone. She will be right back!" And at that moment she actually did walk through the doorway, truly a lovely star to rise in this rustic sky. Both daughters still "dressed German," as they used to call it, and the almost extinct national costume suited Frederica especially well: a short, white, round little skirt with a flounce, not so long as to hide a pair of very pretty ankles and feet; a tight-fitting white bodice, and a black taffeta apron—there she stood, on the borderline between country and city girl. She was so slim and light of step that she seemed to be weightless, and her neck seemed almost too fragile to bear the heavy blond braids on her small, dainty head. Her cheerful blue eyes looked around brightly, and her pretty little turned-up nose poked into the air as freely as if the world were without a care. A straw hat hung from her arm; and so at the very first glance I had the pleasure of seeing and knowing her in all her charm and loveliness.

I now began to play my role in moderation, half ashamed to deceive such good people. I did not lack time to observe them, for the girls continued that conversation with energy and enthusiasm. All the relatives and neighbors had to file past again, and my imagination was confronted with such a swarm of uncles and aunts, male and female cousins, comers, goers, godparents, and guests that I thought myself living in the most populous world conceivable. All the family members had spoken a few words to me, and the mother gave me a long look

every time she came or went, but Frederica was the first to draw me into a conversation. When I picked up some sheets of music lying about and looked through them, she asked whether I played too. When I said yes, she requested me to give a rendition of something, but the father prevented me, asserting that it would first be proper to favor the guest with some piece of music or a song.

She played various pieces with a certain amount of ability, in the way one usually hears in the country, on a piano that the schoolmaster was supposed to have tuned long ago, if he had the time. Now she was to sing a song as well, one that was tenderly sad, but she had no success with it at all. She stood up and said with a smile, or rather, with the expression of bright joy that constantly rested on her face, "If I sing badly, I cannot put the blame on the piano and the schoolmaster. But do just come outside, and then you shall hear my little Swiss and Alsatian songs, which sound much better."

At the evening meal I was so preoccupied with an idea which had already occurred to me earlier that I grew pensive and silent, although the elder sister's liveliness and the younger one's charm awoke me often enough from my reveries. I was amazed beyond words to find myself bodily within the Wakefield family. It is true that the father could not be compared with that excellent man—but where would one find his like! On the other hand, all the dignity inherent in that husband manifested itself here in the wife. One could see in her the results of a good upbringing: her behavior was calm, relaxed, cheerful, and inviting.

If the elder daughter did not have Olivia's celebrated beauty, at least she had a good figure and was lively, or rather, impetuous. She was busy everywhere and helped her mother with everything. It was not hard to substitute Frederica for Primrose's Sophia, for little is said of her, except that she is conceded to be amiable; and this is what Frederica really was. Just as the same occupation, the same situation, produces similar, if not identical effects wherever it occurs, so also here many things were discussed and many things happened that had already been heard and seen in the Wakefield family. But when at last, after he had long since been announced and impatiently awaited by his father, a younger son burst into the room and unceremoniously joined us at table without taking much notice of the guests, I could scarcely refrain from exclaiming, "So now you are here too, Moses!"

The conversation at table broadened my view of that rustic family circle, for the subject was various comic occurrences that had taken place here and there. Frederica, who sat beside me, took the occasion to describe various villages to me that would be worth visiting. Since one little story always prompts another, it was all the easier for me to join in the conversation and relate similar happenings. Meanwhile the

good local wine was by no means being spared, and so I was in danger of falling out of my role. For this reason my more prudent friend, taking the moonlight as his excuse, suggested a stroll, which was at once resolved on. He offered the elder girl his arm, I the younger, and so we walked through the wide meadows, paying more heed to the sky above us than to the earth that spread out hazily beside us. Yet Frederica's speeches had nothing to do with moonlight magic. The clarity of her discourse turned night into day and contained nothing that would have indicated or aroused any sentiment. Only, she did direct her statements at me more than before, and she presented her situation, as well as the region and her acquaintances, from the point of view of my getting to know them better. For, as she added, she hoped I would not be the exception, but would visit them again, as every stranger had been glad to do, once he had paid them an initial call.

It was very pleasant for me to remain silent and listen to her describe the little world in which she moved, and the people she particularly esteemed. In doing so, she conveyed to me an idea of her circumstances that was not only clear but charming, and it had a curious effect on me: I suddenly felt deeply chagrined about not having lived near her earlier, and painfully envious of everyone who had been so fortunate as to have been around her in the past. Immediately, as if I had some right to, I took careful note of any descriptions she made of men, whether she referred to them as neighbors, cousins, or baptismal relatives, and let my suspicions go now in one direction, now in another. But how could I expect to discover anything, given my complete ignorance of all the relationships? Finally she grew ever more loquacious and I ever quieter. It was so pleasant to listen to her, and since I only heard her voice, while her features merged into the haziness of the rest of the world, it seemed to me as though I were looking into her heart, which I could only deem very pure because she was revealing it to me with such naive volubility.

When my companion and I reached the guest room that had been prepared for us, he immediately, with self-satisfaction, began some complacent bantering and preened himself on having surprised me so greatly with the similarity of these people to the Primrose family. I agreed with this and expressed my gratitude.—“Truly!” he exclaimed, “the story is all in place. This family compares very well with that, and you, my disguised friend, may have the honor of trying to pass for Mr. Burchell. Furthermore, since villains are not as necessary in ordinary life as in novels, for this time I shall assume the role of the nephew and be better behaved than he was.” But, as much as this conversation pleased me, I changed the subject at once and asked him in all conscience whether he had really not betrayed me. He asserted, “No!” and I had to believe him. He said that, instead, they had inquired

about the amusing table companion who dined with him in the same pension in Strassburg, for they had been told all kinds of preposterous things about this person. I now proceeded to other questions: whether she had ever been in love? if she was in love now? was she engaged? To all of this he gave a negative answer.—“Truly!” I said. “I cannot conceive of anyone’s being as serene as that by nature. If she had loved and lost and regained her composure, or if she were engaged to be married, in either case I could understand it.”

So we went on chatting together deep into the night, and I was already awake again at dawn. The desire to see her again seemed invincible, but while I was dressing I grew horrified at the abominable wardrobe I had so mischievously selected for myself. The further I progressed in donning my garments, the viler I appeared to myself, which after all had been the intended effect. I could possibly have arranged my hair suitably, but when at last I squeezed myself into the borrowed, worn-out gray coat, with its short sleeves that gave me the most absurd appearance, I fell into even blacker despair because I could only see myself partially in a little mirror, and one part kept looking more ridiculous than the other.

My friend woke up in consequence of this toilette and looked out at me over the quilted silk blanket with the contentment given by a good conscience and with a feeling of happy anticipation for the day. I had long been envying him his nice clothes hanging over the chair, and if he had been my size I would have carried them off before his eyes, changed into them outside, and left my cursed disguise behind for him as I hurried into the garden. He would have been good-humored enough to get into my clothes, and the deception would have come to a merry end early in the morning. But there was no use thinking about that or any other proper means of mediation. I found it quite impossible to appear again to Frederica, who had spoken so amicably to my disguised self the evening before, in the outfit that had enabled my friend to pass me off as an industrious and adept, but poor, divinity student. I stood there speculating angrily, and summoned up all my powers of invention, but they forsook me. To top it all off, the fellow who was stretched out there so comfortably stared at me for a while, then suddenly broke out into loud laughter and exclaimed, “No! you really do look abominable!”—I retorted vehemently, “And I know what I am going to do. Farewell, and make my excuses!”—“Are you mad?” he shouted, leaping out of bed in an attempt to stop me. But I was already out of the door, down the stairs, out of the house, the courtyard, and on my way to the inn. In a trice my horse was saddled and I was galloping toward Drusenheim in a raging bad humor, then through the village and ever farther away.

As soon as I felt myself to be at a safe distance, I rode more slowly

and began to feel how infinitely sorry I was to leave. But I surrendered to my fate, very calmly visualized yesterday evening's stroll, and cherished the quiet hope of seeing *her* soon again. Yet this quiet feeling soon transformed itself into impatience, whereupon I resolved to ride quickly back to Strassburg, change clothes, and procure a good, fresh horse. My emotions made me imagine that I could probably arrive again to ask for pardon even before the midday meal, or, as was more likely, at dessert, or certainly toward evening.

I was just about to give my horse the spurs, in order to carry out this resolve, when another and, as it seemed to me, very happy thought passed through my mind. Yesterday I had noticed a most neatly dressed proprietor's son in the inn at Drusenheim, who this morning had also greeted me as he stood in his courtyard engaged in some rustic tasks. He was about my size and had reminded me slightly of myself. No sooner thought than done! Hardly had my horse turned around when I was back in Drusenheim. I led it to the stable and, without wasting words, proposed to the young fellow that he should lend me his clothes for something comical I was planning to do in Sesenheim. I did not have to finish: he accepted my proposition joyfully and praised me for wanting to amuse the "Mamselles." He said they were so good and kind, especially "Mamselle Ricky," and the parents too liked things always to be merry and pleasant. He observed me attentively, and since he apparently took me for a pauper, to judge by my clothes, he said, "If you want to ingratiate yourself, that is the right way." Meanwhile we had already made progress with our exchange of clothing, and really he ought not to have entrusted his Sunday suit to me with mine as surety for it; but he was simple-hearted, and besides, he had my horse in his stable. Soon I was standing there looking very dapper. I puffed out my chest, and my friend seemed to view his counterpart with satisfaction.—"Agreed, Sir Brother!" he said, holding out a hand which I heartily grasped, "and do not come too near my girl. She might get confused."

My hair had now regained its former growth, and I could part it approximately as he did his. Looking at him repeatedly, I thought it would be amusing to imitate his heavier eyebrows slightly with a charred bottle-cork, bringing mine closer together, so that I could present an outward mystery to match my mysterious intentions. "Do you not," I asked, as he handed me his beribboned hat, "have something to deliver to the parsonage, so that I could announce myself there in a natural manner?"—"Good!" he replied, "but then you will have to wait two more hours. We have a woman in childbed staying with us. I shall offer to take the cake, and then you may carry it over. Pride must suffer misery, and so must a joke." I decided to wait, but these two hours

seemed endlessly long, and I was perishing with impatience when the third hour passed before the cake emerged from the oven. Finally I received it all warm, and in the brightest sunshine I carried it away as my credential. My counterpart accompanied me part of the way and promised to come by for me toward evening, bringing along my clothes. I declined this vigorously and reserved the privilege of returning his to him.

I had not run far with my gift, which I carried tied up in a clean napkin, when I saw from a distance that my friend Weyland was coming toward me with the two girls. My heart sank, as it really should not have done under this jacket. I stopped, caught my breath, and tried to reflect on my next move, and it was only now that I noticed how favorable the terrain was for me. They were walking on the other side of the brook, which, like the strip of meadow it was flowing through, kept the two footpaths quite far apart. Frederica had caught sight of me a long time before, and when they were opposite, she shouted, "George, what are you bringing us?" I was clever enough to cover my face with the hat I had removed, as I held the laden napkin high in the air.—"A christening cake!" she shouted in response to that. "How is your sister coming along?"—"Foin," said I, trying to sound foreign, if not exactly Alsatian.—"Take it to our house!" said the elder girl, "And if you do not find our mother there, give it to the maid. But wait for us. We shall come back soon, do you hear?"—I hurried along the path in hopeful anticipation that everything would end well, since the beginning was fortunate; and I soon reached the parsonage. I found no one either in the house or the kitchen. I conjectured that the man of the house was busy in his study, and since I did not want to disturb him I sat down on the bench by the door, the cake next to me, and put the hat over my face.

I can hardly remember a more pleasant feeling: Here I was, sitting again at this threshold, over which I had shortly before stumbled out in despair. I had seen her again and heard her dear voice, shortly after my ill humor had made me imagine a long separation. I was awaiting both her, at any moment, and a discovery which made my heart beat faster, but, in this ambiguous case, a discovery without disgrace. Then, right at the beginning, there would be a more comical trick than any we had laughed at yesterday! Love and necessity are, after all, the best teachers. At this juncture they were working together, and their apprentice did not prove to be unworthy of them.

But now the maid came walking out of the barn.—"Say! did the cakes turn out well?" she called to me. "How is your sister coming along?"—"Everyt'ing foin," I said, and pointed to the cake without looking up. She took hold of the napkin and grumbled, "Well, what is

wrong with you today? Was Barbie looking at somebody else again? Do not let us suffer for that! A fine marriage you will have, if that keeps up." Since she spoke rather loudly, the pastor came to the window and asked what was going on. She pointed me out to him. I stood up and turned toward him, but then held my hat before my face again. When he had said a friendly word and bidden me stay, I walked toward the garden and was about to enter it when the pastor's wife, who was coming in at the courtyard gate, called to me. The sun was shining directly into my face, and so I again took advantage of the hat, and greeted her with a bow and scrape. She, however, went into the house, after having urged me not to leave without taking some refreshment. So I walked up and down in the garden. Everything had been very successful up to now, but I fetched a deep sigh to think that the young people would soon be arriving next. However, the mother unexpectedly came up to me and was about to ask a question, when she looked into my face, which I could no longer conceal, and her words died on her lips.—"I was looking for George," she said after a pause, "and whom do I find! Is it you, young sir? How many guises do you really have?"—"In earnest, only one," I replied. "For a joke, as many as you please."—"I do not wish to spoil it," she said with a smile. "Go out from the back of the garden and onto the meadow, until it strikes noon. Then come back, and by that time I will have prepared things for the joke." I did this, but when I was out beyond the hedges of the village gardens and was about to go onto the meadow, some country people were just then coming down the footpath, and I was embarrassed. Therefore I directed my steps to a little wood that crowned a nearby knoll, to hide myself there until the appointed time. But how odd I felt when I entered, for what presented itself to me was a tidy place with benches, from each of which one got a pretty view of the region. Here was the village and its church tower, there Drusenheim and the forested Rhine islands behind it, opposite were the Vosges mountains, and finally the Strassburg cathedral. These various sky-lit paintings were enclosed in bushy frames, so that no sight could have been more delightful and pleasant. I sat down on one of the benches and noticed a little oblong board on the thickest tree trunk, with the inscription, "Frederica's Rest." It did not occur to me that I might have come to disturb this rest, for the best part about a budding passion is that it is not only unconscious of its origin, but also has no thought of any end. Because the feeling is so happy and cheerful, there is no suspicion that it might also cause trouble.

I had hardly had time to look around, and was just about to lose myself in sweet reveries, when I heard someone coming. It was Frederica herself.—"George, what are you doing here?" she shouted from a distance.—"Not George!" I shouted back, running toward her, "but

someone who begs your pardon a thousand times." She looked at me in astonishment, but collected herself at once and said, after taking a rather deep breath, "Horrid man, how you startled me!"—"My first masquerade forced the second on me," I exclaimed. "And the first would have been inexcusable, if I had had any idea whom I was going to visit. Surely you will forgive my present disguise, for it is borrowed from persons you are very friendly with."—Her rather pale cheeks were now tinted the prettiest rosy red.—"At any rate, you shall not be treated worse than George! But now let us sit down! I declare, I am weak in the knees with fright."—I sat down beside her in extreme agitation.—"Thanks to your friend, we know everything up to this morning," she said. "Now tell me the rest." I did not wait for her to say that twice, but described my abhorrence of yesterday's costume so comically, as well as my storming out of the house, that she laughed heartily and charmingly. Then I told the rest of the story, to be sure with all modesty, but still so passionately that it could have passed for a declaration of love in narrative form. I celebrated the pleasure of finding her again by kissing her hand, which she then left lying in mine. Whereas the evening before, on our moonlight walk, she had borne the burden of conversation, I now for my part richly repaid the debt. The pleasure of seeing her again, and of being able to tell her everything I had withheld earlier, was so great that I did not notice, in all my loquaciousness, how pensive and silent she herself had become. She breathed deeply several times, and I asked her pardon again and again for the fright I had caused her. I do not know how long we sat there, but suddenly we heard someone call, "Ricky! Ricky!" It was her sister's voice.—"Now we shall see some excitement," said the dear girl, whose cheerful composure was fully restored. "She is coming up from my side," she added, leaning forward to conceal me partly. "Turn away, so that she does not recognize you immediately." Her sister entered the clearing, but not alone, for Weyland was with her, and both stood petrified when they saw us.

Were we to see a mighty flame suddenly break out from a quiet roof, or encounter a monster of shocking and frightful deformity, we would not be as deeply horrified as we are to lay eyes unexpectedly on something we considered morally impossible.—"What does this mean?" shouted the girl with the hastiness of a startled person. "What is this? You with George, hand in hand! How am I to understand that?"—"Dear sister," Frederica answered quite seriously, "this poor man is apologizing for something, and he wants to apologize to you too; but you must pardon him in advance."—"I do not understand it, I cannot grasp it," said the sister, shaking her head and looking at Weyland, who, in his quiet way, stood there quite calmly and contemplated the scene without uttering a word. Frederica stood up and pulled me after

her. "Do not delay!" she shouted. "Pardon asked and granted!" "Yes, indeed!" I said, approaching fairly close to the older girl. "I am in need of pardon!" She started back, gave a loud cry, and turned all red; then she threw herself down on the grass, laughed immoderately, and could not stop. Weyland smiled with self-satisfaction and shouted, "You are an excellent fellow!" Then he shook my hand in his. Usually he was not generous with his caresses, although his handshake had a cordial, invigorating quality; but he was chary of it as well.

After some recuperation and regaining of composure, we started back to the village. On the way, I learned how this remarkable meeting had come about. Frederica, toward the end of the stroll, had gone off to her little retreat to rest for a moment before it was time to eat. When the other two came home, the mother had sent them off posthaste to fetch Frederica, because the noonday meal was ready.

Her sister was in the most frolicsome humor, and when she learned that their mother had already discovered the secret, she exclaimed, "Now all that is left is to dupe Father, Brother, the hired man, and the maid as well." When we got as far as the garden fence, Frederica had to go into the house first, with my friend. The maid was busy in the kitchen garden, and Olivia (may the elder sister be named that here) called to her, "Wait, I have something to tell you!" She left me standing by the hedge and went over to the girl. I could see them talking very seriously. Olivia pretended to her that George had fallen out with Barbie and seemed to feel like marrying her instead. That did not displease the wench, and now I was called to confirm what had been said. The pretty, robust child lowered her eyes and stayed thus until I stood quite close to her. When, however, she suddenly glimpsed the strange face, she, too, gave a loud cry and ran away. Olivia bade me run after her and catch hold of her, so that she would not get into the house and raise a commotion. She herself, however, would go in and see what her father was doing. On the way, Olivia encountered the hired man, who was fond of the maid; meanwhile I had overtaken the girl and was holding her fast.—"Just imagine! What good luck!" shouted Olivia. "It is all over with Barbie, and George is going to marry Lizzie."—"I have been expecting that for a long time," said the good chap, and stood there sulkily.

I had made the girl understand that our main intention was to dupe the papa. We advanced on the lad, who turned around and tried to leave, but Lizzie fetched him back, and he too, when he was undeceived, behaved most strangely. We went to the house together. The table was set and the father already in the room. Olivia, who kept me behind her, stepped on the threshold and said, "Father, it is all right with you, is it not, if George eats with us today? But you must let him

keep his hat on.”—“For all I care!” said the old man, “But why something so unusual? Has he hurt himself?” She drew me forward as I stood there with my hat on. “No!” she said, leading me into the room, but he has a nest of birds under there, which might fly out and cause an infernal hubbub, for these are all roguish birds.” Her father accepted the jest without really knowing what it was all about. At that moment she took off my hat, bowed and scraped, and demanded that I do likewise. The old man looked, and recognized me, but did not lose his priestly composure. “Well, well, Sir Probationer!” he exclaimed, and raised a threatening finger. “You have changed saddles quickly, and overnight I am losing an assistant who only yesterday promised so faithfully that he would sometimes take over the weekday service for me.” Then he laughed heartily, bade me welcome, and we sat down at table. Moses came in much later, for he, as the spoiled youngest child, was accustomed to pay no heed to the midday bell. Besides, he paid little attention to the company, scarcely even when he was contradicting someone. To be surer of fooling him, they had not put me between the two sisters but at the end of the table, where George sometimes used to sit. When he had come in by the door behind me, he struck me a hard blow on the shoulder and said, “George, enjoy your meal!”—“Thank you very much, Squire!” I replied.—The strange voice, the strange face startled him.—“What do you say?” shouted Olivia. “Does he not strongly resemble his brother?”—“Yes, indeed, from the back,” said Moses, who was able to collect himself immediately, “like everybody else.” He did not give me another glance, but only occupied himself with making up for lost time and devouring the various courses as fast as possible. Then, at his good pleasure, he also rose and elected to attend to something in the courtyard and garden. At dessert, the real George came in and made the whole scene still livelier. The idea was to tease him about his jealousy and to rebuke him for creating a rival for himself in me, but he was cautious and clever enough, in a half-sleepy way, to make such confusion between himself, his intended, his counterpart, and the “Mamselles” that at last we no longer knew whom he was talking about and were only too glad to let him consume a glass of wine and a slice of his own cake in peace.

After the meal there was talk of wanting to take a stroll, but this would not have been proper in my farmer’s clothes. Already this morning, however, when they found out who it was that had run away in such great haste, the girls had remembered a cousin’s handsome braid-trimmed coat, which he wore for hunting when he visited, and which was hanging in the wardrobe. But I refused it, outwardly, to be sure, with all sorts of banter, but inwardly with a feeling of vanity, not wanting the cousin’s image to destroy the good impression I had made

as a farmer. The father had retired to take his afternoon nap, while the mother, as ever, was busy with the household. My friend then suggested that I should tell a story, and I immediately acquiesced. We betook ourselves to a spacious arbor, and I recited a fairy tale which I later wrote down under the title, "The New Melusina."¹⁷⁵ It corresponds to "The New Paris" much as the young man does to the boy, and I would insert it here if I were not afraid that its strange plays of fancy would detract from the simple rustic reality now agreeably surrounding us. Suffice it to say that I succeeded in garnering the reward desired by the inventor and narrator of such productions: curiosity was aroused, attentiveness was secured, and premature solutions were suggested for impenetrable mysteries; expectations were disappointed, confusion was caused by the replacement of strange things with even stranger ones, and pity and fear were aroused; there was concern, there was compassion, until, in the end, transformation of the apparent seriousness into a clever and cheerful jest satisfied the heart and left material to provide the imagination with new images, and the mind with further reflection.

Someone at a future time may read this fairy tale in print and doubt whether it could have produced such an effect; but let him then consider that a human being is really only required to be effective in the present. Writing is a misuse of language, and solitary silent reading is a sad surrogate for discourse. A human being's personality is what affects his fellow man most, youth what most strongly affects youth; and effects produced thus are the purest ones. It is these that invigorate the world and prevent it from dying out either morally or physically. From my father I had inherited a certain didactic loquacity, from my mother the gift of depicting brightly and forcefully everything produced and comprehended by the imagination: of freshening up familiar fairy tales, of inventing and narrating new ones, indeed of inventing as I went along. On account of that paternal endowment I frequently grew irksome to company, for who cares to hear someone else's opinions and sentiments, particularly those of a youth, whose judgment always seems unsound because of the gaps in his experience? On the other hand, my mother had really equipped me well to be socially entertaining. Even the most vapid fairy tale appeals greatly to the imagination, and the mind will gratefully accept the slightest substance it may have.

It was through such presentations, which cost me no effort at all, that I made myself popular with children, stimulated and delighted young people, and attracted the attention of older persons. However, I soon had to discontinue these exercises in ordinary society, and on that account have forfeited far too much of my pleasure in life and the free development of my spirit. Yet those two parental gifts have accompanied me throughout my life, combined with a third: the need to

express myself in figures and similes. The judicious and clever Doctor Gall¹⁷⁶ used his theory to recognize these qualities in me, and on this basis asserted that I was actually born to be a popular orator. I was not a little startled by this revelation; for there was nothing to orate about in my nation, and if what he said was true, then the other things that I could undertake were not my real calling.

PART THREE

Provision has been made to keep the
trees from growing up to the sky.

Book Eleven

When, in that arbor at Sesenheim, I had finished my tale with its pleasant mixture of commonplace and impossible events, I saw that my female auditors, who had displayed the most remarkable interest all along, were absolutely enchanted by my singular presentation. They pleaded with me to write the story down, so that they could often read it again either by themselves or aloud to others. I was only too happy to promise this, since I hoped it would give me an excuse to repeat my visit, and an opportunity to forge closer ties. The group dispersed for a moment, and apparently everyone felt that the evening would be somewhat dull after such a lively day. My friend freed me of this worry by asking if we could take our leave at once. Being an industrious citizen of academe who never neglected his duties, he wanted to spend the night in Drusenheim and be in Strassburg early in the morning.

We both reached our quarters for the night in silence—I, because I felt pulled back by a barbed hook in my heart, he, because he had something else in mind which he communicated to me immediately after we arrived.—“It is really strange,” he began, “that you hit upon just this fairy tale. Did you not notice that it made a very special impression?”—“Of course,” I replied to this. “How could I not have noticed that the older girl laughed too hard at certain passages, while the younger shook her head, some meaningful glances were exchanged, and you yourself almost lost your composure. I do not deny it almost threw me off, for the thought went through my mind that it was perhaps improper to tell those good children such absurd stories, which they might better remain ignorant of, and to give them as bad an impression of men as they would be bound to get from the adventurer figure.” “By no means!” he answered. “You cannot guess, and how should you? These good children are not as ignorant of such matters as you think. The larger society around them supplies them with a great many things to ponder on, and there is a married couple living across the Rhine exactly like the one you described, except for your fairy-tale exaggerations. He is just as big, robust, and coarse, whereas she is so dainty and delicate he could almost carry her in the palm of his hand. The rest of their situation and their story also correspond so well to your tale that the girls seriously asked me whether you knew these persons and had slyly depicted them. I emphatically said ‘No!’ and you would be wise to leave the fairy tale unwritten. We shall find a way to excuse you with pretexts and delays.”

I was much amazed, for I had not thought of any couple either on

this or that side of the Rhine, and could not even have said how the idea had occurred to me. I liked to occupy my mind with such trifles, not associating them with anything else, and expected others to feel the same way when I narrated them.

When I returned to my affairs in town, I found them more inconvenient than ever. A naturally active person tends to make too many plans and to overload himself with work. This proceeds well enough until some physical or moral hindrance emerges to show clearly how inadequate one's energies are for the undertaking.

I pursued my legal studies with as much diligence as was required to obtain my degree with some honor. Medical studies took my fancy because they gave me an awareness, though not an explanation, of nature in all its aspects, and I was tied to them by habit and my associates. I also had to devote some time and attention to society, for many families had done numerous things for my sake and in my honor. But I could have borne all this and carried on with it if Herder had not laid such an extremely heavy burden on me. He had torn away the curtain that hid from me the poverty of German literature. He had cruelly destroyed a great many of my prejudices. Only a few notable stars were left in the national sky, for he treated all the others like so many transitory meteors. Indeed the very hopes and dreams I had for myself had been so badly spoiled by him that I began to despair of my own capabilities. Yet he simultaneously drew me along the broad, splendid road he himself was inclined to travel, brought his favorite writers to my attention (Swift and Hamann heading the list), and straightened me up again more forcefully than he had bowed me down. To this manifold confusion was added the beginning of a passion which threatened to consume me, and could distract me from those other concerns but not very well relieve me of them. What is more, a physical malady developed, namely that my throat felt choked up after I ate; and not until later was I freed of this by the simple expedient of giving up a red wine that we usually drank in the pension and much enjoyed. This intolerable discomfort had not afflicted me in Sesenheim, so that I was doubly happy to be there; but when I returned to my town diet, it immediately set in again, to my great distress. All this made me pensive and morose, and my external appearance may well have matched my inner feelings.

More chagrined than ever because just after my meal that malady had violently attacked me again, I attended the clinical lecture. Our respected teacher's great cheerfulness and ease of manner, as he led us from bed to bed, his precise indication of significant symptoms, his estimation of the general course of the illness, his beautiful Hippocratic procedure, by which knowledge develops not from theory, but personal experience, and the concluding remarks with which he customarily

topped off his lectures—all this attracted me to him and made this unfamiliar subject, into which I only peered as through a crack, still more fascinating and dear to me. My horror of sick people gradually diminished as I learned to transform these conditions into concepts through which healing and the restoration of human form and essence seemed possible. Apparently I, as a peculiar young man, had especially caught his eye and he had excused the curious anomaly that led me to his classes. This time he did not close his lecture with the usual instruction concerning some illness we had observed, but genially said, "Gentlemen! we are about to have some vacation. Use it to refresh yourselves. Studies are not exclusively a matter of seriousness and diligence; they must also be treated cheerfully and with freedom of spirit. Give your bodies some exercise and wander through the beautiful countryside on foot and on horseback. If native born, you will rejoice in the familiar; if a stranger, you will get new impressions and be left with pleasant memories."

There were really only two of us to whom this admonition could have been directed. I hope the second one understood this prescription as well as I did! I thought I was hearing a voice from heaven and hurried as fast as I could to order a horse and get neatly dressed in good clothes. I sent for Weyland, but he was not to be found. This did not delay my resolve, but unfortunately the arrangements dragged on, and I did not get away as early as I had hoped. As hard as I rode, the night still overtook me. The path was easy to follow, and the moon illuminated my passionate enterprise. The night was windy and fearsome, and I galloped ahead in order not to have to wait until the next morning for sight of her.

It was quite late when I put up my horse in Sesenheim. In answer to my question whether there was still light on in the parsonage, the innkeeper assured me that the girls had just gone home. He thought he had heard them say they were still expecting a stranger. That did not suit me, for I would have wished to be the only guest. I hurried after them, so that I might at least be the first to come, late as I was. I found the two sisters sitting outside by the door. They did not seem very astonished, but I certainly was, when Frederica whispered to Olivia, but loudly enough so that I could hear it, "Did I not tell you? There he is!" They led me into the room, and I found that a little collation had been laid out. The mother greeted me like an old acquaintance, but when the older girl viewed me in the light, she broke out into loud laughter, for she had but little self-control.

After this first, somewhat strange reception, the conversation at once grew easy and cheerful, and whatever stayed hidden from me in the evening I found out the next morning. Frederica had predicted I would come, and who is not rather pleased when some premonition comes

true, even a sad one? All presentiments, if confirmed by an event, give a person a higher concept of himself, whether it is because he can consider himself so sensitive as to feel a remote reference, or so intelligent as to perceive necessary but nevertheless uncertain connections.—Olivia's laughter also remained no secret: she confessed that it struck her as very funny to see me dressed up and well decked out this time. Frederica, on the other hand, preferred not to interpret my good appearance as vanity, but as a wish to please her.

Early in the morning Frederica summoned me to go for a stroll. Her mother and sister were busy preparing everything for the reception of several guests. At the dear girl's side I enjoyed a splendid Sunday morning in the country, just like those our estimable Hebel¹ has so vividly described for us. She told me about the expected company and asked me to help her make everyone participate in the entertainment, if possible, and to keep things going in a certain order. "Usually," she said, "people find their individual amusements; fun and games are only barely sampled, and finally some are left with nothing to do except to play cards, while others exhaust themselves dancing."

Accordingly we drew up a plan of what was to happen before and after the meal, explained new social games to each other, and were in pleasant agreement when the bell called us to church, where, at her side, her father's rather dry sermon did not seem too long to me.

The proximity of one's beloved always makes time pass quickly, but I also spent this hour in some special meditation. I went over the merits she had just demonstrated to me so plainly: her discreet cheerfulness, her naiveté combined with awareness, her happy disposition combined with foresight—qualities that seemed incompatible but which coincided in her and showed very sweetly in her outward appearance. Then, however, I had to undertake some rather stern consideration of myself, which inhibited an unalloyed cheerfulness.

Since that passionate girl had cursed and sanctified my lips (for every consecration, after all, does both), I had been superstitious enough to guard against kissing any girl, for fear of injuring her in some mysterious spiritual way. Therefore I overcame all the urgent desire that impels a young man to wrest this favor, which can imply much or little, from a charming girl. But even in the most mannerly company a troublesome test often awaited me. It was those more or less clever, so-called "little games," which serve to gather and unify a lively youthful circle. To a great extent they are based on forfeits, and kisses are of no small value in redeeming them. I had resolved once and for all not to kiss, and since any deficiency or hindrance can rouse us to activities we are otherwise not inclined to, I summoned up all the talent and humor at my command to struggle my way through and yet gain rather than lose, both for the company and in its estimation. When a verse was demanded

as redemption for a forfeit, the challenge was usually directed at me. Of course I was always prepared, and on such occasions was able to offer something in praise of the hostess or whichever young lady had treated me the most civilly. If it nevertheless happened that a kiss was imposed on me, I would try to extricate myself with a turn of phrase that was equally satisfactory; and since I had time to reflect beforehand, I was not at a loss for various pretty speeches. But the spontaneous ones always succeeded best.

When we returned home, the guests, who had arrived from many different parts, were already milling about happily. But then Frederica assembled them, invited them for a walk to a pretty spot, and led the way there. They found an abundant collation and wanted to pass the time until the noon meal with social games. At this point, with Frederica's consent, although she did not suspect my secret, I was able to introduce and conduct games without forfeits, or in which forfeits were redeemed without kisses.

I needed my artistry and skill even more since the company, although otherwise quite unfamiliar with me, evidently soon suspected a relationship between me and the dear girl, and now slyly made every effort to compel me to do what I was secretly trying to avoid. For in such circles, if an incipient affection between young persons is noticed, every attempt is made to embarrass them or bring them closer together; just as later, when love has declared itself, an effort is made to separate them again. The convivial human being cares not at all whether he helps or hurts, so long as he is entertained.

By being somewhat observant on this morning I was able to come to such a complete understanding of Frederica's ways that she gave me no surprises for the rest of the time. It only took the friendly greetings of the farmers, directed principally to her, to show that she was benevolent to them and had their warm approval. At home, the elder sister was the mother's helper. Frederica was not asked to do anything that required physical exertion. They spared her, it was said, because of her chest.

There are persons of the female sex who seem especially pleasing indoors, and others who show off to better advantage outside; Frederica was among the latter. Her manner, her figure, were never set off more charmingly than when she walked along a raised footpath. The grace of her bearing seemed to compete with the flowery earth, and the imperturbable cheerfulness of her countenance with the blue sky above. She was surrounded by a refreshing aura, which also came back home with her, and it soon became noticeable that she understood how to smooth out difficulties and gently erase the impression of unpleasant little incidents.

The purest delight that one can take in one's beloved is to see how

she delights others. Frederica's conduct in company was universally benevolent. On walks, she would hover back and forth like an enlivening spirit and was able to fill the gaps that might show up here and there. We have already praised the lightness of her movements, and she was prettiest of all when she ran. Just as the deer seems to fulfill its purpose in life best when it lightly skims above the sprouting grain, she too seemed to express her personal qualities most distinctly when she hastened away in a light run over ridge and meadow to fetch something forgotten, to look for something lost, to hail a distant couple to join us, or to deliver some necessary message. She never got winded doing so, and remained completely poised; therefore her parents' extreme concern for her chest could not but seem exaggerated to some people.

Her father, who sometimes accompanied us through the fields and pastures, frequently did not have a suitable walking partner. Therefore I now joined him and of course he struck up his favorite theme and regaled me with the details of the proposed rebuilding of the parsonage. He especially complained that he could not retrieve the carefully drawn plans, so as to consider them and reflect about this or that improvement. My reply was that they could easily be replaced, and I offered to execute a ground plan, which was actually what everything else depended on. He was quite content with this, and since the schoolmaster was supposed to assist with the necessary measurements, the pastor immediately hurried away to alert him, so that the measuring rod for feet and inches would be ready the next morning.

When he had gone, Frederica said, "You are very kind to treat our dear father's weak point so considerately and not avoid or interrupt him as others do who are already weary of this subject. Of course, I must confess to you that the rest of us do not want the reconstruction, as it would cost the congregation dearly, and us as well. New house, new furnishings! Our guests would not feel more at ease with us, for they are much too used to the old house. Here we can entertain them generously; there we would be limited, in spite of all our space. That is how the matter stands. But do continue to be agreeable, and I shall be sincerely grateful to you."

Another young woman who joined us asked us about several novels, wondering whether Frederica had read them. She said no, for in any case she read little, having grown up in an atmosphere of cheerful, moral enjoyment of life, and her cultural development was commensurate with this. I had *Wakefield* on the tip of my tongue, but did not dare offer her the book, since the similarity of conditions was too striking and significant.—"I love to read novels," she said. "One finds such nice people in them, whom one would like to resemble."

The house was measured the next morning. This went rather slowly, since I was as little adept in such skills as the schoolmaster. Eventually

a tolerable outline came into existence. The father explained his intentions to me, and was not unhappy when I left to draw up the plan more conveniently in town. Frederica was not unwilling to release me, for she was as convinced of my affection as I was of hers, and the six hours no longer seemed any great distance. It would be so easy to take the stagecoach to Drusenheim or else to keep in touch through this vehicle and the regular or special messengers that George would dispatch.

When I arrived back in town, I used the earliest hours of the morning—for late sleeping was out of the question now—to work on the plan, which I drew as neatly as possible. Meanwhile I had sent books to her and written a short, friendly note in addition. I received an immediate answer and was delighted with her pretty, light, sincere handwriting. The content and style were also natural, good, loving, straight from the heart, and so the pleasant impression she had made on me was constantly preserved and renewed. I liked nothing better than to review the merits of her lovely nature, and I nurtured the hope of getting to see her again for an extended time.

There was no longer any need of encouragement on the part of my worthy professor. His words, coming at just the right time, had so thoroughly cured me that I had little desire to see him or his patients again. My correspondence with Frederica became livelier. She invited me to a party to which all their friends from across the Rhine were coming, and I was to prepare for a fairly long visit. I did so by loading a sizable portmanteau onto the stagecoach, and in a few hours I was at her side. I encountered a large, merry company, but drew her father aside and handed him the plan, which made him very happy. I discussed with him what I had tried to do in it, and he was beside himself with pleasure. He especially praised the neatness of the drawing, which was something I had practiced from childhood on and taken special pains with this time, using the finest paper. But our good host's pleasure was soon spoiled when, contrary to my advice, he, in the joy of his heart, presented the plan to the assembled company. Far from expressing the interest he hoped for, some of them paid no attention at all to this fine piece of work, whereas others, who thought they had some understanding of the matter, did even worse: they criticized the outline as artistically incorrect, and, while the old man momentarily looked away, they treated these neat pages like rough drafts. One of them took a hard pencil and drew his suggestions for improvement so crudely over the delicate paper that there could be no thought of restoring its original purity.

I could hardly console the indignant old man when he saw his pleasure being so disgracefully reduced to nothing, however much I assured him that I myself only regarded these things as sketches for us to discuss

before basing new drawings on them. In spite of all that he walked away in a dudgeon, and Frederica thanked me both for being considerate of her father and patient with the bad manners of my fellow guests.

But neither grief nor vexation were known to me in her proximity. The company consisted of young, rather noisy friends, whom an old gentleman, however, strove to outdo by making even odder statements than they did. Wine had not been spared even at breakfast, and no one held back from indulging himself at the bountiful noonday table. Everything tasted better to them all after their strenuous exercise in rather warm weather, and if the old magistrate had made a bit too much of a good thing, the young people did not lag far behind him.

I was infinitely happy at Frederica's side, talkative, merry, clever, saucy, and yet kept in moderation by feeling, respect, and attachment. She, as happy as I, was open, cheerful, interested, and communicative. We seemed to live only for the company and were really living just for each other.

After the meal we looked for a shady spot, social games were begun, and games of forfeit took their turn. When it came to redeeming the forfeits, everything became exaggerated in every way: the gestures called for, the actions to be performed, and the riddles to be solved—they all evinced a rash merriment that knows no bounds. I myself intensified these wild jests with many a prank, while Frederica shone with many a droll fancy. She seemed lovelier to me than ever; all my hypochondriacal, superstitious crochets vanished, and when the opportunity arose to give my tenderly beloved a hearty kiss, I did not pass it up, and even less did I deny myself the repetition of this joy.

The company's hope for music was at last fulfilled. It sounded, and everyone hastened to the dance. The allemandes, with their waltzing and turning, made up the beginning, middle, and end. They had all grown up with this national dance. Nor did I shame my secret instructresses too much, and Frederica, for whom dancing was the same as walking, leaping, and running, was most delighted to find me an experienced partner. We mostly stayed together, but soon had to stop because she was being exhorted from all sides not to continue such wild activity. We compensated ourselves with a solitary stroll, hand in hand, and, in that quiet clearing, with the most heartfelt embrace and most faithful assertion that we loved each other deeply.

Older persons, who had risen from their card games, drew us away with them. At the evening collation there was no privacy either. Dancing went on until late at night, and there were just as many healths drunk and other occasions for drinking as at midday.

I had hardly had several hours of very deep slumber when I was awakened by my heated and excited blood. It is at such hours and

under such conditions that care and remorse customarily attack the person lying there defenseless. At the same time, my imagination painted me the most vivid pictures: I saw Lucinda as she angrily retreated from me after her vehement kiss, as she spoke that curse with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, thinking only to threaten her sister and yet unwittingly menacing innocent strangers. I saw Frederica standing opposite her, petrified at the sight, pale and feeling the effects of a curse she knew nothing of. I found myself in the middle, able neither to deny the spiritual effects of that adventure nor to avoid that kiss with its prophecy of misfortune. Frederica's delicate health seemed to hasten the threatened disaster, and now her love for me appeared quite fatal. I wished to be miles away.

However, I do not wish to conceal something even worse in the background. That superstition was being sustained in me by a certain conceit: My lips—consecrated or cursed—seemed more significant to me than before, and I felt quite smug about my continent behavior, for I had denied myself many an innocent pleasure, partly in order to preserve that magical superiority and partly not to injure an innocent being by surrendering it.

But from now on all was irretrievably lost. I had reverted to an ordinary condition; I thought I had injured the dearest of persons, and damaged her irreparably. And so, instead of being rid of that curse, I had made it retreat from my lips into my own heart.

All these things compounded to rage through my blood, which was excited by love and passion, wine and dance. My thinking was so confused and my feelings so tormented that, especially in contrast to yesterday's pleasant delights, I found myself in seemingly boundless despair. Fortunately, daylight looked in at me through a gap in the shutter, and the sun rose, overcoming all the powers of the night, and put me on my feet. Soon I was out of doors and quickly refreshed, if not restored.

Like many another fancy, superstition very easily loses its force when it ceases to flatter our vanity and instead becomes a hindrance that gives this tender creature some bad moments. At that point we realize that we can be rid of it whenever we wish. We renounce it the more readily when everything we shield from it works to our advantage. The sight of Frederica, the feeling of her love, the cheerfulness of the surroundings—all this reproached me for having sheltered such dreary nightfowl in the midst of my happiest days. I thought I had banished them forever. The dear girl's increasingly familiar and confiding behavior gladdened me through and through, and I was delighted when this time, at parting, she quite publicly kissed me, like her other friends and relatives.

In town many duties and distractions awaited me, from which I often

roused myself to think of my beloved with the aid of correspondence that had now been put on a regular basis. In her letters too, she always stayed the same: whether she was reporting some news or alluding to known events, whether rapidly describing or momentarily reflecting, it was ever as though even with her pen she was always going and coming, running and leaping, with a foot both light and sure. And I very much enjoyed writing to her as well. Visualizing her merits increased my affection even in her absence, so that this kind of conversation was scarcely inferior to a personal one, nay, eventually became even more pleasant and dear to me.

For that superstition of mine had been obliged to yield entirely. It was based, of course, on impressions from my earlier years; but the temper of the times, the rashness of youth, and my association with cool, intelligent men all worked against it. In my whole environment, there was hardly anyone who would not have found a confession of my melancholy thoughts totally ridiculous. But the worst of it was that the departure of this fancy left me with a real view of the situation, which was one in which young people are always found when their first loves can promise no permanent results. It helped me little to be rid of error, only to have reason and reflection play an even worse role in my situation. My passion grew, the more I became acquainted with the worth of this excellent girl. Yet the time was approaching when I was to lose all that dear goodness, perhaps forever.

We had lived on for a while, quietly and pleasantly, when my friend Weyland played the roguish trick of bringing *The Vicar of Wakefield* along to Sesenheim, and when the subject of reading aloud was broached, he handed it to me unexpectedly, as if no special significance were attached to it. I was able to compose myself and read as cheerfully and unselfconsciously as I possibly could. The faces of my listeners also brightened at once, and they did not seem to be at all displeased at being compelled to make comparisons again. If they had found comic counterparts for Raymond and Melusina, here they saw themselves in a mirror that was by no means disfiguring. They did not expressly admit, but did not deny either, that they were in the company of persons of kindred spirit and feelings.

As they progress in their cultural development, all people of good quality sense that they have a double role to play in the world, a real and an ideal one, and this feeling must be viewed as the basis of every noble impulse. We learn only too clearly the real part assigned us; as far as the other is concerned, we can seldom be certain of it. Let a person seek his higher purpose in earth or in heaven, in the present or the future; for all that he will still remain exposed inwardly to eternal vacillation, and outwardly to ever-disturbing influences, until he re-

solves once and for all to declare that the right thing is whatever conforms to him.

Surely the youthful propensity for comparing oneself with characters in novels must be numbered among the most pardonable attempts to progress to something higher, to equate oneself with something higher. It is very innocent, and very harmless, however much it is fulminated against. It is amusement for times when we might otherwise perish from boredom or take up some reckless pastime.

How often the litany is repeated about the injuriousness of novels! And is it really a calamity when a well-behaved young girl or a proper young man identifies with personages who have a better or worse lot in life? Is everyday life of such great value, or do daily needs so utterly consume a person, that he must reject all the claims of beauty?

Thus, no doubt, the historic-poetic baptismal names which have invaded the German church and displaced the saints' names, not infrequently to the chagrin of the officiating clergymen, must be seen as little offshoots of romantic-poetic fiction. This wish to ennoble one's child with a euphonious name is laudable too, even if there is nothing to back it up, and this linking of an imaginary world to the real one can shed a pleasant glow over a person's whole life. But whereas we can approve of calling some pretty child Bertha, it would be an insult to call her Ursula-Blandina. Certainly such a name would stick in the throat of any cultivated person, to say nothing of a lover. One cannot blame the world, with its cold and one-sided judgments, for ridiculing everything of a fantastic nature. But the thoughtful student of mankind must be able to judge a thing on its own merits.

This comparison, although forced on them by a rogue, had the most agreeable consequences for the condition of those lovers on the beautiful banks of the Rhine. One does not look into a mirror to think, but to feel and accept. So it is with those moral facsimiles of ourselves, in whom, as though in a silhouette, we recognize our manners and inclinations, our habits and peculiarities; and we strive with fraternal affection to grasp and embrace them.

Our habit of being together grew ever more ingrained. It was taken for granted that I was a member of this circle. It was allowed to happen and continue without any real question about what the result was to be. And where are the parents who do not find it necessary to let their sons and daughters drift along for a while in such undecided situations, until chance determines their lives in a better way than any long-arranged plan could have done?

They believed they were justified in having complete confidence in Frederica's character and my integrity, for my curious abstinence even from innocent caresses had prejudiced them in my favor. They left us

unchaperoned, as was the general custom there at the time, and we were free to decide if we wanted to roam through the area, in larger or smaller groups, and visit neighboring friends. The persons whom I had seen united in Sesenheim I now found distributed on both sides of the Rhine, in Haguenau, Fort Louis, and the Orten Mead, each one a friendly host in his own home, hospitable and more than ready to open up not only kitchen and cellar, but gardens and vineyards, indeed the whole region, to us. The Rhine islands also were often the goal of our boat excursions. There, without mercy, we pulled out the cool denizens of the clear Rhine and put them into the caldron, onto the grill, and into the sizzling fat. Perhaps we would have settled down rather too comfortably in the snug fishermen's huts, had we not been driven away again after a few hours by the horrid Rhine gnats. This was an intolerable disturbance on one of our finest pleasure outings, where everything else had gone well and the lovers' affection seemed to keep pace with the success of the undertaking; and on this account, when we awkwardly and unexpectedly came home too early, I burst out with blasphemous speeches in the presence of the good clergyman father, declaring that these gnats were enough to disabuse me of the thought that the world had been created by a good, wise God. The pious old gentleman then gravely called me to order and instructed me that these gnats and other noxious insects came into existence only after the fall of our first parents, or, if there were some in Paradise, they would just have buzzed pleasantly and not stung. Of course I was mollified at once, for an angry person is easily soothed if we can make him smile. However, I asserted that no angel with a flaming sword had been needed to drive the sinful pair out of the Garden; he would have to let me imagine that this had been accomplished by big gnats from the Tigris and Euphrates. And so I had him laughing again, for the good man could take a joke, or at least let it pass.

But our enjoyment of the times of day and the seasons in this splendid countryside was more serious and inspiring. One needed only to yield to the impressions of the moment in order to savor this clear, pure sky, this shining, rich earth, these balmy evenings, these warm nights, at the dear one's side or near her. For months we were blessed with pure, ethereal mornings, when the sun displayed its whole splendor, having drenched the earth with abundant dew. And, as if to keep this spectacle from becoming too monotonous, clouds often massed above the distant mountains, sometimes in this, sometimes in that region. They remained for days, even weeks, without darkening the pure sky, and the passing storms themselves revived the land and intensified the green, which, before it dried, began to gleam again in the sunshine. The double rainbow, composed of bicolored borders along a dark gray, almost black

strip of celestial ribbon, was more splendid, more colorful, better defined, but also more transitory than I have observed elsewhere.

In these surroundings the desire to compose poetry, which I had not felt for a long time, unexpectedly stirred again. For Frederica I wrote many songs to well-known melodies. They would have made a pretty little volume, but only a few have survived, which are easily identifiable among my other poems.

My curious studies and other obligations required frequent trips back to town, but that gave our affection new life and sheltered us from all the unpleasantnesses that are the usual but disagreeable accompaniment of such little love affairs. Separated from me, she pondered new ways of entertaining me on my return. Separated from her, I kept myself busy for her, trying to appear new to her again with some new gift or idea. Painted ribbons had then just come into fashion, and I painted several for her and sent them ahead with a little poem, since I had to be absent longer this time than I had thought. Also, to keep my promise to her father of a complete building plan, I persuaded a young architect to do the work for me. This man not only wanted to do me a courtesy, but also took delight in the task, and was further motivated by hope of being well received in such a pleasant family. He prepared a ground plan, vertical projection, and cross section of the house. Courtyard and garden were not forgotten, and he also added a detailed, but very moderate cost estimate, so as to make the carrying out of this extensive and costly undertaking seem an easy and workable possibility.

These proofs of our friendly efforts obtained us the most affectionate reception, and when the father saw our great willingness to serve him he ventured another wish, that of having his chaise, which was quite pretty but monochromatic, provided with floral and other decorations. We good-naturedly agreed to do it. Paints, brushes, and similar requisites were procured from shopkeepers and apothecaries in the nearest towns. But, as if to add a bit of Wakefieldian bungling to make things complete, only when it had all been painted most vigorously and colorfully did we notice that we had used the wrong varnish, which would not dry. Neither sunshine nor draft of air, neither dry nor moist weather helped at all. Meanwhile they had to use an old rattletrap, and we had no choice but to rub off all the decoration again, with more trouble than had been required to paint it on. Our disgust with the work grew even worse when the girls asked us, for Heaven's sake, to proceed slowly and carefully, in order to spare the base color; but after this operation there was no restoring it to its original brilliance.

But such unpleasant small episodes disturbed the serenity of our life as little as they did Doctor Primrose and his amiable family. For we, along with their friends and neighbors, had much unexpected good for-

tune: weddings and christenings, the erection of a building, an inheritance, or a lottery prize were announced now by one, now the other, and the enjoyment was shared. All our joy was treated like common property, and we enhanced it with affection and wit. It was not the first or last time that I found myself in families, in social circles, just at the moment of their finest flowering. And if I may flatter myself that I contributed something to the brilliance of these epochs, I must also reproach myself for being the cause of the quicker passing and earlier disappearance of such times.

However, now our love was to suffer another strange test. I shall call it a test, although this is not the right word. The country family I was friends with was related to families in town that were of good standing and repute and in comfortable financial circumstances. The young townspeople were often in Sesenheim. The older persons, the mothers and aunts, were less active, but they heard many tales about the life out there, about the growing charm of the daughters, and even about my influence. So first they wanted to become acquainted with me and then, after I had visited them several times and been well received, demanded to see us all together, especially since they felt themselves obligated to offer the others a friendly return for their hospitality.

There was long discussion back and forth about this. The mother could hardly get away from her household, Olivia had an aversion to the town, where she was out of place, and Frederica had no inclination for it. And so the affair was delayed until it was finally settled by the fact that I could not possibly go out to the country for a fortnight, and they preferred seeing me in town, with some restraints, to not at all. Thus I now found my female friends, whom I was accustomed to see only amidst rustic scenery, whose image had previously appeared to me against a background of swaying tree branches, rippling brooks, nodding meadow flowers, and a horizon open for miles—now I saw them for the first time in spacious, but nevertheless confining, town rooms, and in relation to wallpaper, mirrors, tall-case clocks, and porcelain figurines.

One's feelings about a sweetheart are so unequivocal that surroundings mean little, but what the heart does demand is that they be the suitable, natural, customary surroundings. With my lively awareness of everything around me, I could not immediately adjust to the contradiction. The decorous, calmly noble conduct of the mother fit perfectly into this circle, and she was not different from the other women. Olivia, on the other hand, fidgeted about like a fish out of water. Just as she would call to me in the garden or beckon me to her side in the field, so she did here, drawing me into a window recess. She did it with awkward embarrassment, because she felt it was not proper, but she

did it anyway. What she had to say to me was the most unimportant thing imaginable, no more than what I already knew: that she was suffering horribly, that she wished to go to the Rhine, across the Rhine, nay, to Turkey. Frederica, however, was very remarkable in this situation. Actually, she did not fit in well either, but it was a testimony to her character that, instead of adapting to conditions, she unconsciously modeled conditions after herself. Just as she handled company in the country, so she handled it here. She was able to enliven every moment. Without disturbance, she set everything in motion and by that very means calmed the company, for company is really only disturbed by boredom. Thereby she perfectly met the wishes of the town aunts, who for once wanted to witness those rustic games and entertainments from their own sofa. When there had been enough of this, the wardrobe, the jewelry, and whatever else especially distinguished the town nieces in their French clothing were viewed and admired without envy. Frederica also made it easy for herself in regard to me, by treating me as she always did. She did not appear to single me out in any way except that she directed her desires, her wishes, to me rather than anyone else and by that acknowledged me as her servant.

She confidently presumed on this servitude on one of the following days when she told me in private that the ladies wanted to hear me read. The daughters of the house had reported a great deal about that, for in Sesenheim I read when and whatever they desired. I was ready to comply at once, but asked their attentive silence for several hours. They agreed to this, and in one evening I read the whole of *Hamlet* without interruption, penetrating into the sense of the play with all the force at my command and expressing myself with the liveliness and passion peculiar to youth. I received great applause. From time to time Frederica had sighed deeply, and a fleeting blush would suffuse her cheeks. These two symptoms of the stirring of a tender heart, while outwardly she seemed serene and quiet, were not unrecognized by me; it was the only reward for which I strove. She joyfully accepted their gratitude for having prompted me to do this, and in her delicate way did not deny herself the small pride of having shone to advantage in me and through me.

This visit to town was not to have lasted long, but the departure kept being delayed. Frederica did her best to entertain the company, and I also contributed my share; but the abundant resources that were so productive in the country soon dried up in the town, and the elder sister made the situation even more embarrassing by gradually losing her composure completely. The two sisters were the only ones in the group who "dressed German." Frederica had never had any other thought in mind and believed herself to be correct anywhere; she did not make comparisons. But Olivia found it intolerable to wander about

in this fashionable society looking like a maid. In the country she scarcely noticed other people's town clothing, and did not want it; in town she could not bear her country attire. All of this, added to the town females' other accomplishments and the hundred trifling details of a totally contrasting environment, caused great ferment in her passionate breast. For several days I had to flatter her with all my attention in order to soothe her, as Frederica asked me to do. I feared an emotional scene. I foresaw the moment when she would fling herself at my feet and beseech me by all the saints to deliver her from this situation. She was divinely good and kind when left to behave in her own way, but pressure like this immediately made her uncomfortable and could ultimately drive her to desperation. Therefore, Frederica not being averse to the idea, I tried to hasten what her mother and Olivia wanted. I did not withhold my praise of Frederica in contrast to her sister. I told her how glad I was to find her unchanged in these surroundings, still as free as a bird up among the branches. She was polite enough to reply that I was there, after all, and she was content so long as I was with her.

When I finally saw them drive away, it was as though a stone fell from my heart. My feelings were halfway between those of Frederica and Olivia. To be sure, I was not as upset as the latter, but by no means felt as comfortable as the former.

Since I had actually gone to Strassburg to take my licentiate in law, surely it was one of the vagaries in my life that I considered this central business to be a matter of secondary importance. I had very easily shunted aside my anxiety about the examination. Now, however, the time had come to think about my dissertation, for on departing from Frankfurt I had promised my father, and firmly resolved within myself, to write one. The mistake of those who can do some things, nay, a great deal, is to think that they can do everything, and youth really must think this if it is to do anything at all. I had acquired a fairly good overview of jurisprudence and its whole framework, and individual legal subjects adequately interested me. Moreover, having made good Leyser² my model, I believed I would succeed fairly well with my modicum of common sense. Great developments were taking place in the field of law: judgments were to be more equitable, all prescriptive rights were daily being challenged, and especially criminal justice was on the verge of a great change. Personally, I was well aware that the systematic legal argument I had constructed showed endless gaps. I lacked genuine knowledge, and no inner inclination urged me toward these subjects. Nor was there any external stimulus, for actually I had become fascinated with quite a different area of study. Generally, a subject had to offer me something before it could arouse my interest; I had to detect

productivity and future prospects in it. Thus I had indeed noted some materials and even begun assembling them; I also studied my collection, again pondered the assertions I wanted to make and my scheme for arranging the individual elements, and continued to work for a while in this manner. But soon I was clever enough to see that I was at a standstill, and that the treatment of a particular material required particular diligent perseverance. Indeed, before one can successfully carry out even such a particular task, one must be, if not a master, at least an experienced journeyman, in the whole area.

The friends whom I told of my embarrassment found me ridiculous, and said that theses could be defended just as well as a dissertation, indeed better, and in Strassburg this was not at all unusual. I was easily persuaded to take this way of escape, but when I wrote to my father about it, he demanded a proper work, saying that I could certainly complete one if I wanted to and devoted the necessary time to it. Now I was forced to resort to a general topic and to choose one with which I was conversant. I was really more familiar with church history than secular history, and I had always been very much interested in the everlasting two-directional conflict of the church, the publicly acknowledged form of worship. For on the one hand it is always at variance with the state, to which it wants to be superior, and on the other with individuals, all of whom it wants to gather in. For its part, the state will not cede sovereignty, while individuals resist the church's coercion. The goals of the state are always public and general, those of the individual are domestic, heartfelt, and personal. From childhood on I had witnessed movements in which the clergy first quarreled with the authorities, then with the congregation. Therefore in my youthful mind I had determined that the state, as law-giver, had the right to designate a ritual to be taught and observed by the clergy, while the layman should in every respect conform to it externally and publicly. For the rest, no inquiry should be made into the individual's thoughts, feelings, or meditations. I believed that I had thereby resolved all the conflicts at one and the same time. For my dissertation, therefore, I chose the first half of this theme, namely, that the lawgiver has not only the right, but also the duty of establishing a certain ritual, which neither the clergy nor the laity may renounce. I developed this theme in part historically, in part logically, by showing that all official religions had been introduced by military leaders, kings, and powerful men, this being the case even with Christianity. Of course, the example of Protestantism was right at hand. I set to work on this paper the more boldly since I was really writing it only to satisfy my father, and my dearest wish and hope was for it not to pass censorship. Thanks to Behrisch I still felt an unconquerable aversion to seeing any work of mine in

print, and my association with Herder had revealed my inadequacies to me only too plainly. Nay, on account of this I had very definitely come to feel a certain mistrust of myself.

Since I drew almost entirely on my own prior knowledge for this work, and spoke and wrote Latin fluently, the time spent on the treatise passed very pleasantly. There was at least some foundation for the idea, from a rhetorical standpoint the presentation was not bad, and the whole was well rounded off. As soon as I was finished, I went through it with a good Latin scholar. He was unable to improve my style generally, but with a gentle touch he at any rate eradicated all the obvious defects, so that something worthy of exhibiting resulted. A clean copy was immediately sent to my father, who, while displeased that none of the subjects I had broached earlier had been undertaken, still, as a thoroughly convinced Protestant, was well satisfied with the boldness of the venture. My oddness was tolerated, my exertions praised, and he envisioned an excellent reaction to the publication of this little work.

I now handed in my manuscript to the law faculty, which fortunately behaved both intelligently and kindly. The dean, a bright, lively man, began by praising my work, then proceeded to its questionable aspects, which he by degrees characterized as dangerous, and concluded by saying that it might not be advisable to publish this work as an academic dissertation. The aspirant (he said) had demonstrated to the faculty that he was a young thinker of great promise; and in order to avoid delay, they would gladly permit me to defend some theses. Later on, after all, I could publish my treatise either as written or further elaborated, and in Latin, or some other language. As a private individual and a Protestant, this would be easy for me anywhere, and then I could enjoy the acclaim that much more purely and generally. I could hardly conceal from the good man what a stone his exhortation had rolled from my heart. Every new argument he adduced to prevent his refusal from grieving or angering me raised my spirits higher, and eventually his also rose when, contrary to his expectations, I did not object to his reasons but instead found them very illuminating and promised to follow his advice and instructions to the letter. Then I sat down again with my coach. Theses were selected and printed, and the defence took place amidst great merriment, nay, frivolity, since the opposition was composed of my table companions. My old practice of opening up the *Corpus juris* at random stood me in very good stead, and I was declared to be a well-informed man. A good traditional banquet concluded the ceremonies.

Meantime my father was very unhappy that this little work had not been duly printed as a dissertation, because he had hoped it would add luster to my entry into Frankfurt. Consequently he wanted to have it

published separately, but I protested that the material had only been sketched out and needed to be enlarged upon at a future time. With this in mind he carefully stored the manuscript, and several years later I still saw it lying among his papers.

The licentiate was bestowed on me on August 6, 1771; the next day, Schöpfliⁿ died in his seventy-fifth year. Even though we never had any close contact he had significantly influenced me, for excellent men who are our contemporaries may be compared to the larger stars: as long as they remain above the horizon our eye turns toward them, feeling strengthened and developed whenever it is permitted to absorb such perfection. Generous Nature had given Schöpfliⁿ a pleasing exterior, a slim figure, friendly eyes, an eloquent tongue, and a thoroughly agreeable presence. Nor had she stinted in bestowing intellectual gifts on this favorite of hers, and his success was the result of innate, quietly developed talents rather than of strenuous exertions. He was one of those fortunate people who have the knack of uniting the past with the present, who understand how historical knowledge may be combined with interest in present-day life. Born in the Basel territory and reared in Basel and Strassburg, he was a true son of the paradisiacal Rhine valley, his extensive, well-situated fatherland. Having been directed to historical and antiquarian subjects, his active imagination seized upon them avidly; and, with his handy memory, he forgot nothing. In his eagerness to learn and teach he pursued an evenly forward-moving course of life and study. He soon emerged and achieved eminence without any sort of interruption. He easily made his way into the literary and civil world, for a knowledge of history is always sufficient, and affability always makes attachments. He traveled through Germany, Holland, France, and Italy; he amused princes and was never a burden to courtiers, except when his lively volubility prolonged their hours at table or in the audience chamber. On the other hand, he earned the confidence of statesmen, worked out the most thorough presentations for them, and so found a platform for his talents everywhere. Many places wanted to retain him, but he persisted in his loyalty to Strassburg and the French court. His uncompromising German honesty was recognized there too, and he was protected even against the secret attacks of the powerful Praetor Klinglin. Sociable and loquacious by nature, he expended his energies in company as much as in scholarship and official duties, and it would be hard to understand where he found all this time if we did not know that he had a life-long aversion to women, and thus gained ever so many hours and days that are happily wasted by those well disposed to the fair sex.

Moreover, as an author he also belonged to the commonalty, and as an orator, to the masses. His essays for school programs, his speeches, and his addresses were dedicated to the special occasion, to the festivity

taking place, and even his great work *Alsatia illustrata* was part of life, because in it he resurrected the past, freshened up faded figures, gave new life to hewn and fashioned stone, and brought dim, fragmented inscriptions back before the eyes and mind of the reader. He filled Alsace and its vicinity with activity like this. In Baden and the Palatinate he maintained an uninterrupted influence into his last years. In Mannheim he founded the Academy of Science and continued as its president until his death.

The only time I came into actual contact with this excellent man was one night when we honored him with a torchlight serenade. The old institute building's courtyard with its overarching linden trees was not so much illuminated as filled with smoke by our torches. When the sounds of music ended he came down to join us, and here he was really in his element. The slim, well-built, cheerful old man stood before us with a relaxed, open, but dignified demeanor. He considered us worthy of a kindly speech, which he delivered with paternal affection and not a trace of stiffness or pedantry. In that moment we had a high opinion of ourselves, since he was treating us like the kings and princes he was so often called upon to address publicly. We expressed our satisfaction very loudly, with repeated sounding of trumpets and drums, and then this charming, promising academic plebs drifted homeward, feeling a warm pleasure.

His pupils and research associates, Koch⁴ and Oberlin,⁵ came into a rather closer relationship with me. My amateur interest in ancient relics was very great. They repeatedly let me visit the museum, which contained many of the artifacts referred to in Schöpflin's great work on Alsace. I did not become acquainted with this particular work until after I had taken the trip on which I found ancient remains still on their original sites; but now, with the thorough information it gave me, I could go on my longer and shorter excursions able to visualize the Rhine valley as a Roman possession and to imagine ancient times as if I were in a waking dream.

Hardly had I made some progress in this, when Oberlin turned my attention to the monuments of medieval times. He acquainted me with surviving ruins and relics, seals and documents, and even tried to instill in me a taste for the so-called "minnesingers" and "heroic poets." I owe this worthy man, as well as Mr. Koch, a great deal, and I would have been obligated to them for my success in life, if matters had proceeded according to their wish and will. But what actually happened is as follows:

Schöpflin, who had spent his entire life moving in a higher sphere, that of constitutional law, knew how much influence this and related studies can procure at court and in cabinets for someone of capable intellect; therefore he felt an overpowering, indeed unjust aversion to

those who practised civil law, and had imbued his students with like sentiments. Both of the aforesaid men, being friends of Salzmann, had very kindly taken cognizance of me. More than I did myself, they appreciated my passionate attachment to external objects and the way I portrayed them so as to emphasize their merits and lend them special interest. The slight, I can well say scanty, attention that I paid to civil law had not gone unnoticed by them. They knew me well enough to realize how easily I could be influenced. I had made no secret of my inclination to an academic life, and therefore they thought, at first just in passing, but then more definitely, that they would win me over to history, constitutional law, and rhetoric. Strassburg itself offered plentiful advantages. There were prospects of the German chancery in Versailles; and there was the example of Schöpflin (whose merits, to be sure, seemed unattainable to me) to arouse me, if not to imitation, at least to emulation. Perhaps this would lead to the development of a like talent, which would not only benefit him who could boast of having it, but might also be profitable to others, who intended to use it for their own purposes. These patrons of mine, and Salzmann with them, set great store by my memory and ability to grasp the sense of languages, and mainly used both of these to support their plans and suggestions.

How all of this came to nothing, and how it happened that I crossed over again from the French side to the German, I propose to relate fully here. Let me be permitted, as before, to make a few general remarks by way of transition.

There are few biographies that can depict an individual's progress as being pure, calm, and steady. Our lives, like the context in which we live, are an incomprehensible mixture of freedom and necessity. Our desires proclaim in advance what we will do under any set of circumstances. These circumstances, however, control us in their own way. The "what" is within us, the "how" rarely depends on us, the "why" we dare not inquire about, and therefore we are correctly referred to the *quia*.

I had been fond of the French language since childhood. I had first encountered it under rather colorful circumstances and through it had become acquainted with a more colorful life. I had assimilated it without grammar and instruction, through social contacts and practice, like a second mother tongue. Now I wanted to use it with greater ease, and therefore chose Strassburg over other universities for my second academic sojourn. But unfortunately that was to prove the very place where I would experience the reversal of my hopes and be turned away from this language and these customs, rather than toward them.

The French, who in general make a point of having good manners, are considerate of foreigners who are beginning to speak their language, and will never ridicule or bluntly rebuke anyone for making a mistake.

But since they cannot really tolerate any sins against their language, they have a way of repeating what one has said, but with a different turn of phrase. It is as though they were politely giving confirmation, but at the same time they are employing the expression one really should have used, and thus they lead a person, if he is intelligent and attentive, to what is right and proper.

Although one can profit and be helped by this if one is serious-minded and has enough self-restraint to act the pupil, it is still always a little humiliating. A person talks, after all, for the sake of the subject, and so the interruptions, nay, the departures from it, seem too frequent; one grows impatient and drops the conversation. This is what I experienced considerably more often than others, for I always thought I had something interesting to say and wanted to hear something significant in return, instead of constantly being referred back to the mere expression—as was frequently the case with me since my French was of a much more motley kind than any other foreigner's. I had adopted my expressions as well as my accentuations from servants, valets, sentries, young and old actors, and the lovers, peasants, and heroes in dramas. Then this Babylonian idiom was to be confused still more by a curious ingredient, namely the fact that I liked to listen to the French Reformed clergymen and was especially glad to attend their services since that made a Sunday stroll to Bockenheim not only permissible, but necessary. But even this was not all, for just as in my adolescent years I had been attracted to sixteenth-century German culture, so now my affection spread to the Frenchmen of that splendid epoch. Montaigne, Amyot,⁶ Rabelais, and Marot⁷ were my friends, and they aroused my interest and admiration. All of these elements got mingled so chaotically in my speech that the odd expressions obscured most of the meaning for my listeners. Indeed, cultivated Frenchmen no longer just corrected me in a courteous way, but actually had to rebuke me like schoolmasters. It was a repetition of my earlier experience in Leipzig, except that now I could no longer fall back on the argument that my native region had the same right to speak its idiom as other provinces. Here, on foreign soil, I was expected to adapt to established laws.

Perhaps my comrades and I would have submitted to this, had not an evil genius whispered in our ear that a foreigner's efforts to speak French could never be successful, for a practiced ear would be quick to hear the German, the Italian, the Englishman under his French mask. A person might be tolerated, but by no means be accepted into the bosom of the one true language-church.

Only a few exceptions were recognized. A Mr. von Grimm⁸ was mentioned, but even Schöpflin was said not to have reached the pinnacle. They conceded that he had recognized quite early the necessity

of expressing himself perfectly in French; they approved of his desire to impart his knowledge to everyone, and especially to entertain the great and the eminent; they even praised him for having tried, from his platform, to assimilate the national language and develop as far as possible into a member of the French community and a French orator. But what did it profit him to deny his mother tongue and take pains with a foreign one? He could not please anyone. In society he was accused of being vain, as though anyone would or could impart knowledge to others without having some self-confidence and self-conceit! Next, the elegant sophisticates and language experts asserted that he did not so much converse as expound and philosophize. The latter two were universally acknowledged as the basic, hereditary defects of Germans, and the first as the cardinal French virtue. He had no better fortune as a public speaker. If he let a well-composed speech to the king or the princes appear in print, then the Jesuits, who disliked him as a Protestant, would be quick to point out how un-French his expressions were.

Instead of being consoled by this and willing to bear, as green wood, the burdens of the dry, we were angered by such pedantic injustice. We despaired and let this striking example convince us that an attempt to satisfy the French on this score was in vain, since they concentrated far too rigidly on the external form in which everything had to appear. So we made the opposite resolve to reject the French language totally and to devote ourselves to our mother tongue with more vigor and earnestness than ever before.

For this, too, our lives offered opportunity and willing allies. Alsace was still too new a part of France for old and young to have lost their loving attachment to the old way of life, the old customs, language, and costume. Though the citizen of a conquered land perforce loses half his existence, he considers it a disgrace to surrender the other half voluntarily. Accordingly he clings to everything that helps him recall the former good times and nurtures his hope for the return of a happy era. Numerous inhabitants of Strassburg formed little circles, which in spite of being separate had common purposes. These grew steadily larger and got new recruits from among the many subjects of those German princes who retained great tracts of land under French sovereignty⁹ (for both fathers and sons stayed for shorter or longer periods in Strassburg for the sake of business or study).

At our table as well, nothing but French was spoken. Salzmann could express himself in French with much ease and elegance, but in his endeavors and deeds was certainly all German. Lersé could have been set up as the very model of a German youth. Meyer von Lindau¹⁰ preferred dawdling along in good German to stepping out smartly in good

French; and even though some of the others leaned toward Gallic speech and manners, they also let the general tone prevail, as long as we were together.

From language we turned to affairs of state. Of course, there was not much to be said in praise of our imperial system, and we admitted that it consisted of nothing but legal abuses. But we adopted an even more superior attitude toward the present French system, which was a total confusion of illegal abuses, with a government that wasted its energy in the wrong places and had to accept the fact that a complete change of things was already being prophesied publicly in the darkest colors.

On the other hand, if we glanced to the north, Frederick gleamed at us from there, the polestar around whom Germany, Europe, and indeed the world seemed to revolve. His preponderance in all things was most impressively revealed when the Prussian manual of arms and even Prussian caning were introduced into the French army. For the rest, we forgave him his predilection for a foreign language, and got our satisfaction from the way his French poets, philosophers, and literati continually irritated him, repeatedly declaring that he was only to be viewed and treated as an interloper.

But what estranged us from the French more effectively than anything else was their repeated discourteous assertion that the Germans in general, together with their royal striver after French culture, were lacking in taste. This saying was attached like a refrain to every statement of opinion, and we tried to keep calm and ignore it. But enlightenment on this point eluded us even more when it was claimed that Ménage¹¹ had already said that French authors possessed everything *but* taste. We also heard from present-day Paris that the newest authors, one and all, lacked taste; and Voltaire himself did not entirely escape this ultimate rebuke. Therefore, having been directed repeatedly beforehand to nature, we refused to accept anything but truth and sincerity of feeling, and the quick, straightforward expression of these.

Friendship, love, and brotherhood,
Are they not voiced spontaneously?

was the sign and password by which the members of our little academic horde were wont to recognize and encourage each other. This maxim was behind all our social revels, and one may be sure that on many an evening "Cousin Michael"¹² joined us at these with all his well-known German ways.

One might get the impression from what I have so far related that nothing was involved here except incidental external motivations and personal peculiarities; but in actuality French literature itself possessed certain qualities that were more apt to repel a striving young man than

to attract him. That is to say, it was *venerable* and *refined*, and these two things are not what appeals to youth in its search for freedom and the enjoyment of life.

Since the sixteenth century, the progress of French literature had never really been interrupted, and indeed the periods of internal political and religious unrest, as well as external wars, had only made its advance more rapid. However, people generally asserted it had already had its fullest flowering some one hundred years ago. Favorable circumstances had all at once ripened and harvested an abundant crop, to such an extent that even the greatest talents of the eighteenth century had to be modestly satisfied with the gleanings.

Meanwhile, however, much of it had aged, especially comedy, which required constant refreshing so that, although at the cost of some perfection, it would command new interest and conform to life and manners. Many of the tragedies had disappeared from the stage, and when Voltaire was offered the significant opportunity of editing Corneille's works he did not let it slip, for he wanted to show the defects of this predecessor, whom general opinion declared he had not equalled.

And this same Voltaire, the marvel of his day, was now himself venerable, like the literature he had given life to and dominated for almost a century. At his side many men of letters were still existing or vegetating in more or less active, happy old age, and disappearing, one by one. The influence of high society on literature grew steadily more predominant. The best circles, made up of persons of birth, rank, and wealth, chose literature as one of their main diversions, with the result that it became quite social and refined. Persons of rank and men of letters strove to develop each other culturally, and could not fail to deform each other, for what is refined is essentially negative, and French criticism also became negative, prone to reject, belittle, and talk spitefully. The upper class employed judgments of this kind against the writers, and the writers, with somewhat less decorum, did the same within their own ranks, and even against their patrons. Since they could not impress the public, they tried to astonish it, or win its heart with their humility, and so there arose, in addition to what was stirring church and state to the core, such a turmoil in literature that Voltaire himself needed every bit of his energy and authority to keep himself above the stream of general disrespect. It was already being said openly that he was a wilful, superannuated child; his indefatigably continued efforts were viewed as the futile striving of decrepit old age. Certain principles on which he had insisted throughout his life, and to whose propagation he had devoted his time, no longer readily met with honor and esteem. Indeed the God whom he confessed, in persistent rejection of all atheistic systems, was now disputed. And so he himself, the progenitor and patriarch, had to imitate his youngest rival and watch for the right mo-

ment, strain after new favor, show his friends too much kindness, his enemies too much ill will, and, under the pretense of passionate striving after truth, act disingenuously and falsely. Was it worth while having led such a great, active life, if it was to end in greater dependence than it had begun? It did not escape his great intellect and quick irritability how intolerable the situation was. Sometimes, by fits and starts, he gave vent to his feelings and free rein to his bad humor, stepping into the fray with a few thrusts of his rapier, whereupon friends and foes would pretend to be angry. They all thought he could be disregarded, although not one of them could measure up to him. A public that hears nothing but the opinions of old men too easily becomes precocious, and nothing is more unsatisfactory than a mature opinion when it is adopted by an immature mind.

For us young men, with our German love of nature and truth and our consciousness that honesty toward ourselves and others was the best guide in life and learning, Voltaire's biased dishonesty and his defamation of many worthy persons became an increasing vexation, and every day we became more confirmed in our aversion to him. In order to injure the so-called "preachers," he had never tired of disparaging religion and the sacred books on which it is based, and I often felt uncomfortable about this. But now, when I heard that he had tried to discredit the tradition of a Deluge by denying the existence of petrified shells and calling such things mere tricks of nature, he completely lost my confidence. For the evidence of my eyes had shown me very distinctly on the Bastberg that I was standing on an ancient dried-up sea bottom, amidst the cast-off coverings of its original inhabitants. Yes! once upon a time these mountains had been covered by waves, it made no difference to me whether before or after the Deluge. Suffice it to say, the Rhine valley had been an enormous lake, or an immense inlet. No one could convince me this was not so. Instead I planned to increase my knowledge of lands and mountains, whatever might come of it.

So French literature was venerable and refined, both of itself and thanks to Voltaire. Let us contemplate this remarkable man a while longer!

From youth onwards Voltaire had aimed his desires and efforts in the direction of active social life, politics, great gain, relationships with the lords of this earth, and use of such relationships to become one of these lords himself. It is unlikely that anyone has ever made himself so dependent in order to be independent. He also succeeded in gaining dominion over people's minds: the nation succumbed to him. In vain his opponents developed their modest talents and their enormous hatred; nothing managed to harm him. It is true he could never reconcile the court, but foreign kings paid him homage instead. The "great" Catherine and Frederick, as well as Gustave of Sweden, Christian of Denmark,

Poniatowski of Poland,¹³ Henry of Prussia,¹⁴ Charles of Brunswick¹⁵ declared themselves to be his vassals, and even popes felt they must lure him with a little compliance. That Joseph II ignored him did no great honor to this sovereign, for it would not have detracted from either Joseph or his undertakings if he, with his fine intelligence and excellent sentiments, had been somewhat more intellectual and shown a better appreciation of wit.

What I am here reporting concisely and with some coherence resounded in our ears at that time as the cry of the moment, an eternally discordant cacophony without coherence and instructiveness. All one ever heard was praise of the old writers. Although there was a demand for something good and new, the newest work was nevertheless always rejected. Hardly had some patriot introduced heart-stirring national French subjects into the long-stagnant theater, hardly had the *Siege of Calais*¹⁶ won enthusiastic applause, when this play, along with others of a patriotic nature, was declared hollow and in every sense objectionable. The comedies of manners by Destouches,¹⁷ which had so often delighted me as a boy, were called feeble, and this worthy's name was forgotten. How many other authors I would have to name for whose sake I had to hear the reproach, "You judge like a provincial," when I admitted my interest in them and their works to someone caught up in the latest literary stream!

So we German comrades grew increasingly irked. By sentiment and national characteristics we were inclined to cherish our impressions of things, to digest such impressions slowly, and, if we had to relinquish them, then only at the last moment. We were convinced that nothing is unproductive if one observes it conscientiously and persists in turning one's attention to it, and that perseverance finally enables a person to express and simultaneously substantiate his opinion. Of course we recognized that much advantage and profit were to be found in the great, splendid Gallic realm, for Rousseau had genuinely appealed to us. But if we consider his life and destiny, was he not obliged to find his only reward for all his accomplishments in the privilege of living in Paris unknown and forgotten?

When we heard talk of the Encyclopedists, or opened a volume of their immense work, it was as though we were walking along in a huge factory amidst innumerable looms and bobbins. All that clattering and rattling, all that eye- and mind-boggling mechanism, all those incomprehensible, multifarious interconnections! Seeing how much is involved in the manufacture of a piece of cloth, one takes a sudden dislike to the coat on one's back.

We felt great kinship with Diderot, because in everything for which the French censured him he was truly German. But his standpoint was too lofty and the range of his ideas too wide for us to measure up to

him and stand alongside him. However, we were much delighted with his nature children, whom, with his great rhetorical skill, he made seem noble and important. While his doughty poachers and smugglers charmed us, this was a rabble that subsequently proliferated all too freely on the German Parnassus. Like Rousseau, he was another who popularized an attitude of repugnance toward life in society, and thus subtly paved the way for those world-shaking changes which seemed to threaten every existing institution with destruction.

It behooves us, however, to put aside these observations and take note of how both of these men influenced art. Here, too, they pointed us away from it and toward nature.

The supreme task of every kind of art is to use semblance to give the illusion of a higher reality. But it is erroneous to strive for a semblance so real that it amounts to mere everyday reality.

In terms of an ideal locale, the stage had achieved its best advantage by applying the laws of perspective to wings placed one behind the other; but now it was suggested that this efficient arrangement be wantonly sacrificed in favor of closing up the sides of the performance area to form the actual walls of a room. The play itself, the style of acting—in a word, everything—was to conform to this kind of stage locale, and a completely new dramatic art was to arise from it.

In comedy, French actors had attained the ultimate in artistic truth. They lived in Paris, they could observe the outward appearance of the courtiers, and both actors and actresses were connected with the upper classes through their love affairs. All this helped to transplant the most polished social manners and propriety onto the stage, and the friends of naturalness had little to object to here. However, they thought it especially progressive also to choose serious and tragic subjects, which are by no means lacking in middle-class life, for their plays, and to use prose even for dialogue in the higher style. Thus they gradually banished the unnaturalness of verse together with unnatural declamation and gestures.

Though not very generally taken into consideration, it is most noteworthy that at this time even the old, strict, classical verse tragedy was being threatened with a revolution, and only by great talents and through the force of tradition was it successfully warded off.

That is to say, a man named Aufresne¹⁸ had declared war on everything unnatural and was trying to achieve the highest truthfulness of expression in his tragic acting. He set himself up against the actor Lecain,¹⁹ who played his heroic roles with great theatrical decorum and powerful, elevated expression, eschewing the natural and commonplace. Aufresne's method evidently did not suit the other Parisian actors. He stood alone, and they closed ranks, whereupon he, stubbornly insisting on his ideas, preferred to leave Paris, and came through Strassburg.

There we saw him act the roles of Augustus in *Cinna*, of Mithridates,²⁰ and others of that kind with the truest, most natural dignity. On stage he looked a tall, handsome man, slim rather than sturdy, and agreeably noble, rather than really imposing. His acting was deliberate and calm, without being cold, and quite forceful when necessary. He was a very practiced artist, and among the few who can transform art completely into nature, and nature completely into art. It is merits like his, however, that are misunderstood and then give rise to the doctrine of false naturalism.

And besides, I want to mention a small but epoch-making work, Rousseau's *Pygmalion*.²¹ Much could be said about it, because this curious production is another that alternates between nature and art and misguidedly tries to reduce the latter to the former. We see an artist who has achieved perfection and yet is not satisfied with having given external form to his ideal and thus having lent it a higher life. No! it must also be dragged down into his earthly life. Through a most commonplace sensual action he wants to destroy the highest thing that thought and deed can produce.

All this and many other things, some sensible, some foolish, both true and half-true, affected us and contributed to the still greater confusion of our ideas. We roamed about on many byways and detours, and so it was that from many sides a literary revolution was also being prepared for Germany. We witnessed it and helped work toward it, consciously and unconsciously, willingly and unwillingly.

We felt neither a compulsion nor an inclination to be illuminated and benefited by philosophy, and as far as religious subjects were concerned, we believed we had enlightened ourselves about them; therefore the bitter quarrels between the French philosophers and the clergy were largely a matter of indifference to us. Books which caused a great sensation at that time, which were forbidden and condemned to be burned, exercised no influence on us. In lieu of all the others I shall mention only the *Système de la nature*,²² which we picked up out of curiosity. We did not fathom how such a book could be dangerous. To us it seemed so gray, so Cimmerian, so deathly that we could scarcely bear the sight of it and shuddered as though it were a ghost. The author thought he was specially recommending his book when he asserted in the preface that he was an old man at the end of his life, with one foot in the grave, and now wanted to proclaim the truth to his contemporaries and to posterity.

We scoffed at that, for we had noticed that old people really have no appreciation for anything that is amiable and good about the world. Our favorite pert sayings were: "Old churches have dark windows!" and "Ask children and sparrows about cherries and berries!" And so that book seemed to us the real quintessence of senility and tasteless-

ness, indeed of bad taste. It stated that necessity was everything, and therefore there was no God. We wondered whether God might not also be necessary? Of course we admitted the ineluctable necessities of day and night, of the seasons, of climatic influences, of physical and animal conditions. Yet we felt something like absolute free will within us, and something else seeking to counterbalance this free will.

We could not give up our hope of becoming increasingly rational, of growing more and more independent of external things, indeed of our own selves. The word "freedom" has such a lovely sound that we could not have dispensed with it even if it denoted an error.

Not one of us finished the book, for the expectations we had upon opening it were disappointed. It had proclaimed a system of nature, and so we had really hoped to learn something about our idol, nature. Physics and chemistry, geography and uranography, natural history and anatomy, and so much else had turned our attention for years, and still did, to the great orderly constitution of our world, and we would have liked to learn both details and general facts about suns and stars, planets and moons, mountains, valleys, rivers, and seas, and everything that lives and moves therein. We did not doubt that in this connection it would be necessary to touch on many things a common man might consider harmful, the clergy dangerous, and the state inadmissible; and we hoped this little book had not undergone its trial by fire for nothing. But how hollow and empty we felt in this gloomy, atheistic semi-darkness, which blotted out all the forms on earth, all the stars in the sky! Matter (we read) was eternal, and eternally in motion, and this movement to the right and left and every other direction was said to produce, without more ado, all the infinite phenomena that existed. We might even have accepted all this if the author, in front of our eyes, had constructed the world out of this moving matter. But evidently he knew as little about nature as we did. Hardly had he staked out a few general concepts when he abandoned them and transformed that which is higher than nature—or appears to be a higher nature within nature—into a heavy, material nature that may be in motion but has no direction or form. And he thought he had gained a great deal by doing so.

However, this book did not do us any harm other than make and keep us thoroughly disgusted with all philosophy, and especially metaphysics. On the other hand, we devoted ourselves the more energetically and passionately to living knowledge, to experience, action, and poetry.

So it was on the French border that we were suddenly rid and free of everything connected with the French. We found their mode of life too precise and refined, their literature cold, their criticism scathing, their philosophy abstruse and yet inadequate, and we were on the verge of resigning ourselves, at least experimentally, to raw nature. Fortunately, however, for some time there had been another influence at

work on us, at first secretly and in moderation, but then with increasingly evident and powerful mastery, getting us ready for higher, freer world views and intellectual pleasures, ones that were as true as they were poetic.

I need hardly say that Shakespeare is meant here and, once having made this pronouncement, I believe further elaboration of it is not required. Shakespeare has received more recognition in Germany than in any other nation, perhaps including his own. To him we have abundantly accorded all the justice, fairness, and consideration that we deny each other. Excellent minds have concerned themselves with showing his genius in its most favorable light, and I have always been glad to subscribe to whatever was said in his honor, his favor, or even to excuse him. The influence this extraordinary mind had on me has been described earlier, and some essays I have written about his work have met with approval. Therefore my general declaration here may be sufficient until such time as I, for the sake of any friends who care to hear them, can impart some supplemental observations on his great merits that I was tempted to insert at this point.

For the present I shall merely indicate in greater detail how I first became acquainted with him. It happened rather early, in Leipzig, by way of Dodd's *Beauties of Shakespeare*.²³ Say what one will about collections that introduce authors in mere bits and pieces, they do produce many good results. After all, we are not always in such a composed and receptive mood that we can assimilate a whole work in the manner it deserves. Do we not mark those passages in a book which strongly appeal to us? Young people especially, being deficient in broad cultural development, are thrilled by brilliant passages, and properly so. I still remember the time that was dominated by my interest in the above-mentioned work as being one of the most pleasant in my life. Those splendid qualities—the great sayings, the striking descriptions, the humorous touches—all impressed me individually and mightily.

Then Wieland's translation appeared. It was devoured, and put into the hands of friends and relatives with my recommendation. It was to the advantage of us Germans that several of the significant works of foreign nations were first adapted for us in a light and lucid way. The prose translation of Shakespeare, by Wieland and then Eschenburg, was suitable reading for everyone and could circulate quickly with great effect because it was generally understandable. I honor meter and rhyme, for that is what makes poetry poetry, but the part that is really, deeply, and basically effective, the part that is truly formative and beneficial, is the part of the poet that remains when he is translated into prose. This residue is the pure, complete substance, which a dazzling external form can simulate, when it is lacking, or conceal, when it is present. Consequently, when a youth's cultural development is just

beginning, I consider prose translations more profitable than poetic ones. Boys, of course, feel obliged to make a joke of everything, and one can see how they are amused by the sound of words and the beat of syllables, and destroy the profound substance of the noblest works with a kind of parodistic mischievousness. Therefore I suggest for consideration whether a prose translation of Homer should not soon be undertaken. Of course, it would have to measure up to the present standards attained by German literature. I leave this and everything aforesaid to the discretion of our worthy pedagogues, whose broad experience best qualifies them in such matters. There is just one more thing I would mention in favor of my proposal, namely Luther's translation of the Bible. The fact that this excellent man transmitted a stylistically most varied work and its poetic, historical, imperious, didactic tone to us homogeneously in our mother tongue has benefited religion more than if he had tried to imitate precisely the special characteristics of the original. Efforts have been made subsequently, in vain, to render the Book of Job, the Psalms, and other songs enjoyable for us in their poetic form. A simple translation always remains best for the masses, who have to feel an effect. Those expert translations that compete with the original actually only serve as entertainment for scholarly circles.

And so Shakespeare, both in translation and the original, in excerpts and in his entirety, became so great a force within our Strassburg coterie that, just as some men are very well versed in Scripture, we gradually became well versed in Shakespeare. In our speech we imitated the virtues and vices he had shown us were current in his time, and we took the greatest delight in his eccentric wordplays, not only translating them but inventing new ones in competition with him. It was of no little consequence that I had been the first to seize on him with great enthusiasm. My joyful revelation that something sublime was hovering above me proved contagious to my friends, who all adopted my views. We did not deny it would be possible to examine his merits more closely, to comprehend them, and judge them with discernment, but we reserved this for some later time. At present we only wanted to participate joyfully and imitate actively. In the midst of such great pleasure we did not want to scrutinize and cavil at the man who had given it to us; rather, we were happy just to venerate him unconditionally.

If anyone wants first-hand knowledge of what was thought, spoken, and debated in this lively group, let him read Herder's essay on Shakespeare in the booklet *On German Art and Manner* and, in addition Lenz's *Comments on the German Theater*, to which he appended a translation of *Love's Labor's Lost*.²⁴ Herder delves into the profounder aspects of Shakespeare's world and makes a splendid presentation of them. Lenz, on the other hand, iconoclastically attacks theatrical tradition and wants everything everywhere to be done in the Shakespearian

way. Since I have occasion to mention this strange but talented person, this is probably the place for me to say a few things about him. I met him only toward the end of my Strassburg sojourn. We saw each other rarely, for we belonged to different groups. But we looked for opportunities to meet and enjoyed exchanging ideas because, as young contemporaries, we harbored similar sentiments. Short, but trimly built, he had a charming small face, whose delicate shape conformed perfectly to his pleasant, somewhat stubby features. Blue eyes, blond hair—in brief, a little person of a type I have occasionally encountered among youths from the north: a soft and, as it were, cautious tread, a pleasant, slightly hesitant way of talking, and a demeanor that was very becoming to a young man, being somewhere between reserve and shyness. Shorter poems, especially his own, were read aloud by him very well, and he wrote a flowing hand. The only word I would know to describe his disposition would be the English “whimsical,” which, as the dictionary indicates, combines many oddities into one concept. Perhaps that is the very reason why no one was more capable than he of appreciating and reproducing the excesses and aberrations of Shakespeare’s genius. The aforesaid translation is a testimony to this. He treated his author with great freedom, and by no means adhered closely and faithfully to the text, but he knew so well how to fit himself to his predecessor’s armor or, rather, clown’s suit, and could imitate his gestures so drolly, that he certainly won applause from admirers of such things.

We found the clown’s absurdities especially hilarious, and we congratulated Lenz when he succeeded as follows with the epitaph for the deer shot by the princess:

The pretty princess shot and hit
 A fine young hart, who then stopped living.
 He fell down in a sleeping fit,
 A roast to us he’s giving.
 The hound, he bayed!—Add I to hart,
 And then it is a hartl;
 But put a Roman L to hart,
 It then makes fifty hartls.
 I’ll make an hundred harts of it,
 Write hartll with an L-L.²⁵

A propensity for the absurd, which in youth is displayed freely and without restraint, only to retreat gradually into the background in later years, though never lost entirely, was in full flower among us, and another way we tried to honor our great master was by inventing our own original jests. We were very proud when we could present something of the kind to the group and see it fairly well received, as, for

example, the following poem about a cavalry captain²⁶ who had come to grief on a wild horse:

A noble rider's housèd there,
Beside him dwells a master.
Let's make a posy of this pair,
And get ourselves "ride-master."
If he is master of the ride,
Then rightfully he's named so.
But should the ride the *master* guide,
His family will be shamed so!

We had very serious discussions about such things, as to whether they were worthy of a clown or not, and whether they flowed from the pure, true source of tomfoolery, or if perhaps sense and understanding had not crept in improperly and inadmissibly. Moreover these curious ideas spread more vigorously and were shared by more people because Lessing, in whom everyone had great confidence, had been the one to give the first signal for it all in his *Dramaturgy*.

In the heady company of others in this mood I managed to make many a pleasant trip through upper Alsace, from which (for this very reason) I would return without having garnered any particular information. The many little verses which flowed forth from us at every turn could properly embellish a lively travel account, but they have been lost. In the cloisters of Molsheim Abbey we admired the colorful stained glass windows. We made the fertile region between Colmar and Schlettstadt resound with our comic hymns to Ceres, in which we lauded and analyzed in detail the utilization of those many products and very merrily commented on the important controversy about freedom or limitation of trade in such things. In Ensisheim we saw the huge meteorite that hangs in the church and, in keeping with the scepticism of that time, we joked about people's credulity, never suspecting that such air-engendered objects, though they might not actually fall down on our property, would at any rate be preserved one day as specimens in our cabinets.

I still have happy memories of a pilgrimage made to St. Ottilia's Mount along with a hundred, nay, a thousand true believers. Here, where the foundation walls of a Roman fortification still stand, the beautiful daughter of a count was said to have dwelt in crevices among the ruins, for the sake of piety. Not far from the chapel where the pilgrims find their edification is shown her fountain, about which many a charming tale is told. I formed a mental picture of her which, together with her name, made a deep impression on me. For a long time I kept them both in mind, until I bestowed them on one of my later, but no

less beloved, "daughters,"²⁷ who has been so favorably received by pure and pious hearts.

On this elevation the eye is met again by the sight of splendid Alsace, always the same and always new. Just as one may sit at any spot in an amphitheater and still see the whole audience (but one's neighbors most distinctly, of course), so it is also here with respect to bushes, rocks, hills, woods, fields, meadows, and villages, far and near. Even Basel was said to be visible on the horizon. I cannot swear that we saw it, but here too the distant blue of the Swiss mountains exerted its power over us, demanding that we approach; and since we could not obey this impulse, we were left with a painful feeling.

What made me abandon myself the more gladly to such distractions and jolly times, indeed to the point of being intoxicated with them, was the fact that my passionate attachment to Frederica was beginning to make me uneasy. Such a thoughtlessly nurtured youthful affection can be compared to a bombshell hurled at night, which ascends in a gently gleaming line, mingles with the stars, nay, seems to linger with them for a while, but then, descending, describes the same arc, only in reverse, and finally brings ruin on the place where it ends its course. Frederica remained unchanged, never seeming to think, or to want to think, that our relationship could end so soon. However, Olivia, who also disliked my being away but did not suffer as much loss, was more foresighted, or more candid. Sometimes she spoke to me about my presumable departure, and tried to find some consolation for herself and her sister. A girl who has encouraged a man with her affection can renounce him without nearly as much embarrassment as a youth who has gone equally far in his declarations to a young woman. He always cuts a dismal figure, for as someone developing into manhood he is certainly expected to have a fairly clear notion of what he is doing, and pronounced irresponsibility is most unbecoming to him. A girl's reasons for drawing back always seem valid; a man's, never.

But how can a beguiling emotion give us advance knowledge of where it may lead us? For even when we have quite rationally renounced it, we still cannot release it. We delight in the lovely habit, although perhaps in an altered way. That is how it was in my case. Although I was uneasy in Frederica's presence, when away from her I knew of nothing more pleasant than holding a conversation with her in my thoughts. While I went out there more rarely, we exchanged letters more frequently. She knew how to describe her activities cheerfully and her feelings gracefully, and I called her merits to mind approvingly and passionately. Absence liberated me, and it was through these conversations at a distance that my whole attachment was really brought to blossom. At such moments I could actually delude myself about the future; in any case I was distracted by the onward roll of time and of

pressing affairs. Formerly, my lively interest in the present, the matter of the moment, had enabled me to accomplish the greatest variety of things. But toward the end everything was jammed together in wild confusion, as is generally the case when one is about to disengage oneself from a place.

Another unforeseen event robbed me of my last few days. Namely, I had been in a distinguished company at a country house from which one had a splendid view of the façade of the cathedral and the tower rising above it. "It is too bad," someone said, "that it is not completely finished, and that we have only the one tower." I replied, however, "I am just as sorry to see that not even this one tower has been fully executed. The four volutes end much too bluntly, and four slender spires should have been added, as well as a higher one in the center, where that ungainly cross stands."

After I had made this assertion with my customary animation, a short, sprightly man addressed me, saying, "Who has told you that?"—"The tower itself," I replied. "I have observed it so long and so attentively, and shown it so much affection, that it finally resolved to confess this open secret to me."—"It has not given you false information," he said. "I am in a position to know that best, for I am the steward in charge of works. We still have the original plans in our archive. They indicate the same thing, and I can show them to you." Because of my imminent departure I urged him to do me this favor soon. He let me see the priceless scrolls, and I quickly traced the unexecuted spires through oiled paper, regretting that I had not been apprised of this treasure earlier. But that is how it would always fare with me: first I had to view and contemplate things and then with great effort arrive at a concept which, if it had simply been handed down to me, would perhaps not have been so striking and effective.

In spite of all the stress and confusion, I still could not neglect to see Frederica once more. These were difficult days, and the memory of them has not stayed with me. When, from horseback, I gave her my hand for the last time, there were tears standing in her eyes, and I felt very bad. As I rode along the footpath to Drusenheim, I was seized by the strangest premonition, namely, I saw myself, not with the eyes of the body, but those of the spirit, coming toward myself on horseback on the same path, and, to be sure, in clothing I had never worn: it was bluish gray with some gold trimming. As soon as I shook myself awake from this dream, the figure vanished. Yet it is curious that eight years later I found myself on the same path, coming to visit Frederica once more and dressed in the clothes I had dreamed about, which I was wearing not by choice but coincidence. However the case may be with such things generally, at these moments of farewell the vision gave me some comfort. The pain of leaving splendid Alsace forever, with all I

had acquired there, was alleviated, and having now at last escaped from the tumult of farewell, I recovered my composure to a fair degree on a peaceful and diverting journey.

Once arrived in Mannheim, I hurried with the greatest eagerness to view the Hall of Ancient Sculpture, whose praises were sung by everyone. I had already heard a great deal said in Leipzig about these significant works of art, in connection with the writings of Winckelmann and Lessing, but had seen very few of them. Except for the central figure in the Laocoön group and the Faun with Castanets, there were no plaster casts at the university; and what Oeser saw fit to tell us relating to these statues was at best very obscure. But how can beginners in art be given a concept of its end?

Director Verschaffelt²⁸ gave me a friendly reception. One of his assistants conducted me to the hall and, after he unlocked it, left me to my inclinations and contemplations. So there I now stood, delivered up to the most wondrous impressions, in a spacious rectangular hall that seemed, on account of its extraordinary height, almost to be a cube. Its expanse was well lighted from above by windows just under the molding, and here the most splendid statues of antiquity were not only ranged along the walls but also randomly placed over the whole surface of the floor—a forest of statues through which one had to squeeze, a great ideal assembly of folk through which one had to push one's way. All these splendid forms could be set in the most advantageous light by lifting and lowering the curtains, and besides, they were moveable on their pedestals and could be turned and rotated at will.

After having borne the initial effect of this irresistible mass for a while, I turned to the figures that attracted me most, and who can deny that Apollo Belvedere, with his not too colossal size, slim build, freedom of movement, and look of conquest, also conquers our feelings above all the others? Next I turned to Laocoön, whom I saw here for the first time in company with his sons. I rehearsed in my mind as well as I could all the debates and arguments in regard to him, and tried to find a perspective, but I was pulled in one direction, then in another. The Dying Gladiator captivated me for a long time, but I owed the most particularly blissful moments to the group of Castor and Pollux,²⁹ those precious, problematical remains. I did not know as yet how impossible it is to proceed immediately from enjoyable contemplation to accurate comprehension. I forced myself to reflect, and, although I had no success in attaining any sort of clarity, I did sense that each individual piece within this great assembled mass was intelligible, and that each of the objects was natural and independently significant.

However, it was Laocoön to whom I mostly directed my attention, and I settled the famous question about why he does not scream by

telling myself that he *could* not. In my view, all the actions and motions of the three figures stemmed from the primary conception of the group. The whole violent but artistic posture of the main figure was derived from a combination of two causes: its resistance to the serpents and its shrinking from the immediate bite. In order to alleviate this pain, the abdomen had to be contracted, and that made screaming impossible. I also decided that the younger son had not been bitten, and tried to interpret the artistry of this group in other respects. I wrote a letter to Oeser about it, but he did not pay much heed to my interpretation. His only answer to my good intentions was general encouragement. However, I had the good fortune to hold on to that thought and let it rest in my mind for a few years, until it could finally be joined with the totality of my experiences and convictions. In this context I then published it while editing *The Propylaea*.³⁰

After having so eagerly observed this multitude of ancient statues, I was also to be granted a foretaste of ancient architecture. I found the cast of a capital from the Pantheon, and I do not deny that my faith in northern architecture began to waver a bit at the sight of those huge but elegant acanthus leaves.

This great early act of contemplation, which would continue to affect me throughout my life, was nevertheless of little consequence for the time being. How gladly I would have begun a book with this account, instead of ending one with it! But hardly had the door of this splendid hall closed behind me when I felt the urge to return to my own self again, indeed I tried to banish those figures as being burdensome to my imagination; and only by a very roundabout way was I to be led back into their sphere. At the same time, the quiet productiveness of such impressions is quite invaluable, for one has assimilated them in the process of enjoyment, without the splintering effect of judgment. Youth is capable of this supreme happiness, so long as it eschews criticism and allows itself to be affected by the excellent and good without investigation and analysis.

Book Twelve

The wanderer had now returned home again, healthier and happier than the first time, but still in a generally overexcited condition that did not bespeak complete emotional stability. At the very outset I put my mother into the position of constantly having to adjust events and steer them into some sort of middle ground between my father's stern sense of order and my many eccentricities. In Mainz I had been so taken with a young harp player that I invited the boy to Frankfurt, where the fair was in the offing, and promised him shelter and assistance. Here was another instance of that characteristic which has cost me so dearly in my life, namely my desire to have a collection of younger people attach themselves to me, with the result, of course, that I am eventually burdened with their destinies. One unpleasant experience after the other could not cure me of this innate impulse, which, in spite of my very clear convictions about the matter, even today threatens to lead me astray from time to time. My mother, who was more discerning than I, saw in advance that it could not but seem strange to my father if a musical itinerant were to go forth from such a distinguished house to earn his bread in inns and taverns. Therefore she arranged for him to have his room and board in the neighborhood. I recommended him to my friends, and so the child did not fare badly. After several years I saw him again, and although he had grown taller and more loutish, he had not improved much in his art. She, the good soul, was well satisfied with this initial attempt at settling and glossing over things, but did not suspect how very necessary this skill of hers would become in the near future. My father, who was leading a contented life in the midst of his same old hobbies and pursuits, had the tranquility of someone who has carried through his plans in spite of all hindrances and delays. I now had my terminal degree, and so the first step had been taken in the gradual advancement of my further civil career. My dissertation won his approval; he was occupied with closer examination of it and many preparations for its subsequent publication. During my sojourn in Alsace I had written many little poems, essays, travel notes, and pamphlets. It was entertainment for him to assign headings to these, put them in order, and demand their completion; and he was happy in the expectation that my previously invincible aversion to seeing any of these things printed would soon disappear. My sister had gathered a circle of clever and amiable young women around herself. Without being domineering, she dominated them all, for her intelligence took much in at a glance and her good will smoothed out many things; moreover

she was in the position of playing the confidante rather than the rival. Of my old friends and acquaintances I found Horn unchanged in his loyalty and cheerful companionship. I was also on familiar terms with Riese,³¹ who did not fail to test and exercise my sharpness of wit, for with his persistent contradiction he opposed doubt and denial to the dogmatic enthusiasm I so readily exhibited. By and by others joined this group, and I shall mention them afterwards. However, the brothers Schlosser³² certainly were foremost among the persons who made this new sojourn in my native town pleasant and productive. The elder one, Hieronymus, was a thorough and elegant jurist, with an excellent reputation as an attorney. His favorite refuge was among his books and files, in rooms kept in the most impeccable order, where I never saw him to be otherwise than cheerful and sympathetic. In larger company too he proved to be pleasant and amusing, for his extensive reading had embellished his mind with all the beauty of the ancient world. On occasion he did not scorn to add to our social pleasures with his clever Latin poems. I still have in my possession some humorous distichs which he wrote beneath several portraits I had drawn of strange, well-known Frankfurt eccentrics. I consulted with him frequently about the life and career I was about to begin, and if a hundred different inclinations, emotions, and distractions had not torn me away from this path he would have become my most dependable guide.

His brother George, who had now retired from the service of Duke Eugene of Württemberg in Treptow, was nearer to me in age. While advancing in his knowledge of the world and in practical skills, he had not lagged behind in his comprehensive study of German and foreign literatures. As before, he liked to write in all languages, but did not inspire me to do likewise, since I was now devoted exclusively to German and cultivated the others only so that I could read the best authors fairly well in the original. He showed the same integrity as ever, indeed his acquaintance with the world had evidently moved him to adhere still more strictly, even rigidly, to his principles.

Quite soon, through these two friends, I also became acquainted with Merck,³³ who had already been informed about me, not unfavorably, from Strassburg by Herder. This peculiar man, who was to influence my life so greatly, was by birth a citizen of Darmstadt. I do not know much about his early education. On completion of his studies he guided a youth on a trip to Switzerland, where he stayed for a while and returned with a wife. When I met him, he was the army paymaster in Darmstadt. Endowed with understanding and intellect, he had become very knowledgeable, especially about modern literatures, and had investigated the history of the world and mankind in every time and region. He had the gift of being able to make pertinent and precise judgments. He was esteemed as an honest, dependable official with a good

head for figures. He had easy entrée everywhere, since he was considered a very pleasant companion except by those he had frightened with his caustic ways. He was tall and thin of physique, and had a distinctive, very pointed nose. There was something tigerish about the glance of his bright blue, or perhaps gray, eyes, as they alertly darted back and forth. His profile has been preserved for us in Lavater's *Physiognomics*. There was a remarkable incongruity in his character: by nature a fine, noble, dependable man, he had become embittered with the world, and gave such leeway to this morbidly capricious trait that he felt an irresistible urge deliberately to be a rogue, nay, a rascal. Though calm, sensible, and kind at one moment, at the next it could occur to him, as though he were a snail extending its horns, to do something that would offend, wound, or actually injure another person. But since such dangerous associations are attractive if one does not feel threatened by them, I was all the more inclined to be in his company. I could enjoy his good qualities because I felt confident that he would not turn his bad side toward me. On the one hand, he ruined his social life by this restless tendency to bad manners, this need to treat people spitefully and maliciously; but he also very carefully nurtured another kind of restlessness that disturbed his inner peace. That is, he felt a certain dilettantish creative impulse, and indulged it all the more readily since he was able to express himself with ease and felicity in prose and verse and could hold his own with the beaux esprits of that time. I still have in my possession some poetic epistles of his that show uncommon boldness, bluntness, and Swiftian rancor. While outstanding for their original views about persons and things, they are written with such wounding force that even today I would not care to make them public, but must either destroy them or keep them for posterity as striking documents of the hidden conflict within our literature. He himself found it disagreeable to go about all his work so negatively and destructively, and often declared that he envied me my naive delight in depiction, which stemmed from my pleasure both in my models and what I made of them.

All things considered, his literary dilettantism would have brought him more profit than loss if he had not also felt an irresistible impulse to be active in the fields of technology and commerce. Whenever he fell to cursing his lack of ability and to raging because he could not exercise his talent with enough genius to satisfy his pretensions, he would end by first banishing the visual arts, then poetry, and would plan some enterprises involving factories and commerce which were calculated to bring in money and also divert him.

Moreover there was a group of very cultivated men in Darmstadt. Privy Councillor von Hesse,³⁴ minister to the landgrave, Professor Petersen,³⁵ Rector Wenck,³⁶ and others were the local members, to whose

merit was added that of some men from neighboring towns and of a series of persons traveling through. Privy Councillor von Hesse's wife and her sister, Mlle Flachsland,³⁷ were young women of rare merit and talents, and the latter, being Herder's fiancée, was doubly interesting on account of her personal qualities and her affection for this excellent man.

It would be impossible to state how much this circle stimulated and benefited me. They willingly listened when I read my finished or unfinished works aloud, they encouraged me when I told them candidly and in detail what I was planning to do, and they scolded me when, for the sake of a new project, I neglected something already begun. *Faust* was already well along, *Götz von Berlichingen* was gradually taking shape in my mind, I was occupied with my study of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the cathedral edifice in Strassburg had left me with a very grave impression of itself that made a suitable background for such literary works.

I assembled my thoughts and fancies concerning that style of architecture. The first thing I insisted on was that it be called German and not Gothic, and that it be considered not foreign, but national. Secondly, it should not be compared with Greek and Roman architecture, because it was based on quite a different principle. The former, under a brighter sky, had the roof resting on columns, and so an apertured wall automatically came into existence. We, however, who have no choice but to surround ourselves completely with walls for protection against the weather, ought to venerate the genius who found ways to lend massive walls variety, to give them the appearance of being apertured, and to make the great surfaces a pleasant and worthy object for the eye to study. The same applied to the towers, which do not form a sky within, like a dome, but soar up to the sky outside and were meant to proclaim far and wide in the land the existence of the sanctuary situated at their base. As for the interior of these worthy buildings, I only dared approach it through poetic contemplation and pious feelings.

I do not mean to deprecate the value of these views, and if I had seen fit to clothe them in clear, distinct language and a comprehensible style, then the pamphlet *On German Architecture, Dedicated to the Blessed Spirit of Erwin of Steinbach* would have been more effective at the time I published it and would have attracted the attention of our country's art lovers earlier. However, I was misled by Hamann's and Herder's example and veiled these rather simple thoughts and observations in a dust cloud of strange words and phrases, thus obscuring both for myself and others the light that had been kindled in me. Nevertheless, these pages were well received and were reprinted in Herder's booklet *Of German Art and Manner*.

Although I was now very happily occupied with national antiquities

and was attempting to bring them within my grasp, both out of inclination and for poetic and other purposes, nevertheless I was diverted from them again from time to time by Biblical studies and religious reminiscences. Indeed Luther's life and deeds, which shine so brilliantly in the sixteenth century, could not but lead me back again to the Holy Scriptures and to reflections on religious feelings and opinions. It flattered a small vanity within me to view the Bible as a collective work that had come into existence little by little, with revisions at various times; for this conception was as yet by no means the prevailing one, and was certainly not accepted by the circle I lived in. Luther's text was my standard for the general sense, but for individual details I went to Schmid's literal translation,³⁸ and also tried to make all possible use of my modicum of Hebrew. No one now disputes that contradictions are to be found in the Bible. To offset these, the practice was to use the clearest passage as a base and accommodate the less clear, contradictory passages to that. On the other hand, I wanted to determine by test which passage best expressed the sense of the matter; then I would hold to this and reject the others as interpolations.

At that time I had already adopted a fundamental view, although I cannot say whether it was instilled in me, or aroused in me, or if it was the product of my own reflections. It was namely this: in everything that has been handed down to us, especially in written form, the main thing to consider is the basis, the intrinsic quality, the sense, the tendency of the work. Herein lies whatever is original, divine, effective, sacrosanct, and indestructible; and neither time, nor any external influence or condition can affect this primary inner essence, or at least not more than a bodily sickness can affect a well-cultivated mind. Accordingly, language, dialect, individual characteristics, style, and, in the last analysis, the script are to be viewed as the body of every spiritual work. Although this is closely associated with the inner core, it is still exposed to deterioration and corruption. Indeed nothing whatsoever comes down to us intact in its nature; and even if intact, it would never be perfectly understandable to later periods. Inadequate means of transmittal are responsible for faulty texts; the difference of times and places, but especially the diverseness of human capabilities and mental attitudes, are responsible for faulty interpretation—which is why the exegetes will never come to an agreement.

Investigation of the actual inner quality of a work that particularly appeals to us should therefore be everyone's concern, and above all we should consider how it relates to our own inner selves and how much its living energy can arouse and benefit ours. On the other hand, all external matters and whatever has no effect on us or is subject to doubt must be left to the critics. The latter, even if they were capable of dismembering the whole work, could never succeed in robbing us

of the true basis, to which we hold fast; indeed our confidence, once we have placed it, will not be shaken even for a moment.

This conviction, the result of faith and contemplation, is applicable and supportive in all cases that we recognize as most important, and it is fundamental to the structure of both my moral and literary life. It is to be viewed as a well-invested and abundantly profitable capital, even though in individual instances we can be deceived into applying it incorrectly. Only by means of this concept did the Bible really become accessible to me. I had hastily perused it several times, as is normal in Protestant religious instruction, and indeed had acquainted myself with it in desultory fashion, from front to back and conversely. The rugged naturalness of the Old Testament and the tender naiveté of the New had attracted me in individual passages; and while the Bible as a whole would still not reveal itself to me, at least I was no longer perplexed by the varied character of the various books. I could fix their significance in my mind, going over them conscientiously one by one, and in any case I had put too much of my heart into this book ever to dispense with it again. And it was from this emotional side that I was proof against all mockeries, because I could immediately feel the dishonesty of them. I not only abhorred, I actually became furious at such things, and I can still clearly remember that in my childish fanatical zeal, if I could have gotten hold of Voltaire, I would probably have throttled him on account of his *Saul*.³⁹ Yet every sort of honest investigation appealed to me strongly. As elucidations of the localities and costumes of the Orient dispensed more and more light, I accepted them joyfully and continued to exercise all my intellectual powers on these valuable pieces of information.

It is known how I had already attempted to get an introduction to conditions in the primeval world, as this is described to us in Genesis. Since I now intended to proceed step by step in an orderly fashion, after this long interruption, I attacked Exodus. But what a difference! In the same way that the abundance of childhood had vanished from my life, I also found there was an enormous chasm between the first and second books. The fact that past time has been totally forgotten is evident just from the few significant words, "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." But the people, countless as the stars in the sky, had also almost forgotten the ancestor to whom Jehovah, under the starry heavens, had given this now-fulfilled promise. With untold trouble and inadequate aids and ability I worked my way through the Pentateuch, meanwhile falling into the strangest notions. I believed I had discovered that it was not our Ten Commandments written on those tablets; that the Israelites had not wandered for forty years in the desert, but only a short time; and I also flattered myself that I could furnish some quite new insights into the character of Moses.

Nor was the New Testament secure against my investigations. But although it was not spared by my passion for analysis, I was prompted by love and affection to agree with that salutary saying, "The Gospel writers may contradict each other, so long as the Gospel does not contradict itself!"—In this area too I believed I had made all sorts of discoveries. That gift of tongues which had been dispensed with such splendor and purity at the Pentecost festival was interpreted by me in a somewhat abstruse way that was not designed to win many sympathizers.

I tried without particular success to accommodate myself to one of the main Lutheran dogmas, which the Pietists had applied still more rigorously, namely that man is to be viewed as predominantly sinful. However, I had assimilated the terminology of this doctrine fairly well and used it in a letter in which I chose to adopt the mask of a country parson addressing a new fellow clergyman. Nevertheless, the main theme of this composition was the catchword of those times: it was *tolerance*, and the better minds and spirits subscribed to it.

Things such as this gradually kept being written, and in the following year, to try my luck with the public, I had them printed at my own expense and either gave them away or turned them over to the Eichenberg bookstore, where they might possibly be sold, although without any profit accruing to me. Now and then a review would mention them, sometimes favorably, sometimes not, but they always dropped out of sight immediately. My father carefully preserved them in his archive, otherwise I would not have any copies of them. I shall include them in the new edition of my works along with other similar things, unprinted, that I have still found extant.

Since it was really through Hamann⁴⁰ that I had been misled into the sibylline style used in those pages, as well as to the publication of them, this seems to me an appropriate place for mentioning this worthy, influential man, who was just as great a mystery to us then as he still remains to the nation. His *Socratic Commentaries* made a great stir and were especially dear to persons who could not become reconciled to the showy brilliance of the contemporary intellectual climate. Here one sensed a profoundly thinking, well-grounded man who, although thoroughly familiar with the visible world and literature, still accepted the existence of something secret and inscrutable, and spoke about it in a highly individual manner. Of course, the literary arbiters of the day considered him an abstruse dreamer, but an aspiring younger generation found itself strongly attracted to him. Even the "Quiet Ones in the Land," as they were called half in jest, half in earnest, those pious souls who formed an invisible church without being organized in any way, turned their attention to him. The "magus from the north" was a welcome phenomenon to both my dear Klettenberg and her friend

Moser. Even closer contact was established with him when it was learned that he had managed to preserve his beautiful, sublime character in spite of suffering from domestic penury. President von Moser, with his great influence, could easily have arranged a tolerable and comfortable existence for this very undemanding man. The matter was duly initiated and conditions had been agreed upon closely enough for Hamann to undertake the long journey from Königsberg to Darmstadt.⁴¹ But just then the president happened to be away, and this curious man immediately went back home again, it is not known for what reason. However, their amicable correspondence continued. I still have two letters in my possession from the Königsberger to his patron, and they testify to their author's remarkable nobility and sincerity.

But this good understanding was not to be of long duration. These pious people had imagined him to be pious in their manner too; as the magus from the north⁴² they had treated him with respect, and thought that he would also continue to demonstrate respectable conduct. But he had already given some offense with his *Clouds: A Sequel to the Socratic Commentaries*, and now he went so far as to publish his *Crusades of a Philologist*,⁴³ which, in addition to a title-page vignette depicting the goatish profile of a horned Pan, had a most absurd picture on one of the first pages showing a rooster, carved of wood, beating time for some young roosters who stand in front of him with music held in their claws. This was intended as a lampoon against certain types of church music which evidently did not have the author's approval, but it displeased persons of tender and virtuous mind. When they let the author feel this, he was far from edified and withdrew from any closer connection with them. Yet Herder kept us aware of this man and through constant correspondence with us and his fiancée immediately informed us about whatever issued from that remarkable intellect. This included his book reviews and announcements, all of a most singular character, which appeared in the *Königsberg Gazette*. I possess an almost complete collection of his writings, including the manuscript of a very significant article concerning Herder's prize essay on the origin of language, in which he, in a most individual way, illuminates this Herderian specimen with strange sidelights.

I still hope either to do an edition of Hamann's works⁴⁴ myself or at least to promote one, and then, when these important documents are again brought before the public, it might be time to discuss details of the author's nature and character. In the meantime I shall adduce a few more things here, since I know that some excellent men who liked him are still alive, and I would welcome their corroborations or corrections. The principle underlying all of Hamann's utterances is this: "Everything a human being sets out to accomplish, whether produced by word or deed or otherwise, must arise from the sum of his combined

powers; anything isolated is an abomination." A splendid maxim! But hard to follow. To be sure, it may apply to life and art; but with anything transmitted verbally, except for poetry, a great difficulty presents itself, for words have to be detached or isolated in order to say or mean anything. When a person speaks, for that moment he must be unilateral. There can be no informing, no teaching, without separation. But since Hamann was uncompromisingly resistant to this kind of division and wanted to speak with the same unity that characterized his feelings, imagination, and thought—and demanded the same of others—he came into conflict with his own style and with everything that others could produce. Therefore, in order to accomplish the impossible, he seized on all elements: the most profound, secret perceptions, in which nature and mind meet clandestinely; illuminating lightning flashes of reason that beam forth from such conjunctures; significant images, which hover in these regions; penetrating statements from sacred and profane writers; and various humorous additions besides. All this constitutes the wondrous totality of his style and what he communicated. Because one cannot join him in his depths, nor walk with him on his heights, nor catch hold of the figures hovering before him, nor discover the exact sense of a veiled hint about a passage from somewhere in the vast expanse of literature, the darkness and gloom simply deepen around us the more we study him. And this obscurity can only increase with the passing years, since his allusions were primarily directed to definite particulars existing in the life and literature of the moment. My collection includes some printed pages of his where he has noted in his own hand in the margins the passages to which his hints have alluded. If one looks them up, then another ambiguous, dual light is shed, which may seem very pleasant; but one has to forego anything that approximates understanding. These pages deserve to be called sibylline for the further reason that one cannot look at them like ordinary ones but must wait for an occasion when their oracular statements may offer some refuge. Each time, on opening them, one thinks one has found something new, because the sense inherent in every passage affects and excites us in manifold ways.

I never saw him in person and had no direct correspondence with him. He appears to me to have been very clear-headed about his situation and life and his friendships, and to have had sure instincts about the relationships of people to each other and to him. All the letters from him that I saw were excellent, and much clearer than his writings, because they contained more distinct references to times and circumstances, as well as to personal situations. But what I thought I definitely gleaned from them was that he, very naively conscious of his superior intellectual gifts, always considered himself somewhat wiser and cleverer than his correspondents, whom he addressed with more irony than

cordiality. Even if this was true only in individual cases, for me it was nevertheless the majority of them, and the reason why I never desired a closer contact with him.

On the other hand, we maintained a very lively and genial literary exchange with Herder, except that unfortunately it could never be kept calm and clear. Herder would not leave off teasing and scolding, while Merck required little provocation and could make me share his impatience. Because Herder seemed to honor Swift most of all writers and individuals, our name for him was likewise "the Dean," and this again led to various differences and vexations.

Nevertheless, we rejoiced to hear that he was to receive an appointment to Bückeburg,⁴⁵ which was a twofold honor for him. His new patron had an excellent reputation as an intelligent, brave, though somewhat eccentric man. Thomas Abbt⁴⁶ had become well known, nay, famous while in his service; the nation mourned Abbt's death and took pleasure in the monument dedicated to him by his patron. Now Herder was to take the place of his prematurely deceased predecessor and fulfill all the hopes the latter had so deservedly aroused.

This appointment was lent double luster and value by the period in which it occurred, for Count von der Lippe's example had already been followed by several German princes who accepted into their service not only learned men and those really able to perform official duties, but also gifted and very promising men. It was said that the Margrave Charles had not called Klopstock to Baden⁴⁷ for actual official service but to charm and benefit higher society with his presence. Thus an excellent prince, who turned his attention to everything useful and beautiful, won increased prestige; and so, too, veneration of Klopstock increased to no small degree. Everything issuing from his pen was cherished and valued. We carefully made copies of his odes and elegies, as many as each of us could obtain. Therefore we were extremely pleased when the great Landgravine Caroline of Hesse-Dramstadt had them collected and one of the few copies fell into our hands, so that we were enabled to complete our own handwritten collections.⁴⁸ Consequently it was those original versions that long remained our favorites. Indeed we often continued to take our joy and comfort in poems the author afterwards rejected. How true it is that the life proceeding from a beautiful soul can the more easily affect us, the less it seems to have been forced into the category of art by means of criticism.

Klopstock's character and demeanor had procured prestige and dignity for himself and other men of talent. Now the latter were also possibly going to owe him the security and improvement of their household finances. That is to say, in former times the book trade mostly handled significant, learned, academic works and stock publications, which received modest honoraria. The production of poetic writings

was viewed as something sacred, and it was almost considered an act of simony to accept or increase an honorarium. Authors and publishers stood in the strangest relationship to each other. Both appeared, depending on one's point of view, as patrons and clients. The authors, in addition to their talent, were generally viewed by the public as very moral people; they had intellectual rank and felt rewarded by the success of their work, while the publishers accepted second place and enjoyed good profits. On the other hand, prosperity placed the rich publisher over the poor poet, and so everything was most perfectly balanced. Reciprocal generosity and gratitude were not unusual: Breitkopf and Gottsched were life-long residents of the same house. Niggardliness and villainy, especially on the part of piratical printers, were not yet in vogue.

Nevertheless, a general movement had begun among German authors. They compared their own very modest, if not impoverished, conditions with the wealth of the prestigious publishers. They observed how great the fame of a Gellert or a Rabener was, and what domestic privation a universally popular German writer had to accept unless his life was eased by some other gainful occupation. Even the mediocre and lesser minds felt a lively desire to see an improvement in their situations and to become independent of publishers.

Now Klopstock came forward and offered his *Republic of Scholars*⁴⁹ on subscription. Partly because of the content, partly because of its treatment, the later cantos of *The Messiah* did not have the effect of the earlier ones, which, themselves pure and innocent, appeared at a pure and innocent time. The poet was nevertheless respected as much as before, for he had won the hearts, minds, and souls of many people with the publication of his odes. Many powerful men, among them several of great influence, volunteered prepayment, which was put at one louis d'or, because, as it was said, this was not just a payment for the book but an opportunity to reward the author for his service to the nation. Now everyone crowded up to do the same; even youths and maidens of small means opened their savings boxes; men and women of the upper and middle classes contributed to this hallowed donation, and some one thousand subscribers were assembled. Expectations were at their height, and confidence was as great as could be.

Because of this, when the book appeared the results could not fail to be the strangest imaginable. While of significant value, it was anything but general in its appeal. Klopstock's thoughts about poetry and literature were presented under the form of an ancient German druidic republic, and his maxims about the genuine and the false were hinted at in pithy laconic statements in which instruction was often sacrificed to the curious form. The book was and is invaluable for writers and men of letters, but could only be effective and useful in that sphere.

Anyone who was himself accustomed to thinking could follow this thinker, and anyone able to seek and appreciate genuineness found himself instructed by this good, profound man. But the amateur, the reader, was not enlightened, and the book remained sealed for him. Yet it had been widely distributed, and although everyone had expected to receive a completely usable work, what most people got was something not in the least suited to their taste. There was general consternation, but respect for this man was so great that no grumbling was heard, just a slight murmuring. The young fashionable world accepted its loss and made a joke of giving away their so dearly bought copies. I myself received several from good female friends, none of which, however, I have kept.

This undertaking, which was successful for the author but not the public, had the bad result of making subscriptions and prepayments now not seem very feasible. But the desire for them had become too widespread for no new attempt to be made. The publishing house in Dessau volunteered to take over this enterprise. Here the scholars and publishers were to enter into an exclusive alliance so that both might enjoy the hoped-for profits proportionately. The long, painfully felt need reawakened great feelings of confidence, but they could not be sustained, and unfortunately the participants, after exerting themselves for a brief time, abandoned the project with losses all round.

However, lovers of literature had already been given a means of quick communication: the poetic almanacs united all the young poets, while the journals united the poet with other writers. I took infinite delight in creating, but was indifferent about my productions; my fondness for them would be renewed only when I happily revived them again for myself and others at social gatherings. Many persons also took a sympathetic interest in my larger and smaller works because if anyone felt some inclination and ability for creating I would warmly urge him to accomplish something independently in his own way, and in return they all insisted that I continue with my poems and other writings.

This reciprocal harassment and incitement, which could grow excessive, had a good influence on each of us in his own way. And out of this creative whirl, this desire to live and let live, this give-and-take within a group of unbuttoned youths recklessly following their individual innate characters without any theoretical guidance emerged that famous, much discussed and decried literary epoch in which a throng of young geniuses burst forth with all the boldness and arrogance peculiar to their years. By using their abilities well, they brought about much joy and good; but by misusing them they caused much vexation and evil. It is precisely the effects and countereffects arising from this source that will be the main theme of this book.

But what shall constitute young people's greatest interest, and how can they interest their peers, unless love inspires them and unless affairs of the heart, of whatever kind these may be, are alive in them? I had a lost love to mourn privately. This made me gentle and obliging and more agreeable in company than I had been in glorious times when there was nothing to remind me of any defect or error and I stormed ahead without restraint.

Frederica's answer to my letter of farewell broke my heart. It had the same handwriting, the same thought, the same feeling which had been cultivated for me and by me. Only now did I understand the loss she had suffered, but I saw no way to make it good or even moderate it. She was ever in my mind; I always felt how much I missed her, and the worst of it was, I was responsible for my own unhappiness. Gretchen had been taken from me, and Annette had forsaken me, but here for the first time I was guilty. I had deeply wounded the loveliest heart, and so this period of gloomy remorse, added to my lack of the accustomed refreshment of love, was very painful, nay, intolerable. But a person wants to live, and so I took a sincere interest in others, tried to untangle their difficulties and to unite what was about to separate, so that they would not fare as badly as I. Therefore I was often called "the Confidant," and also "the Wanderer," because I liked to roam about in the region. The only way I could soothe my spirit was to be out under an open sky, in valleys, on heights, in fields and woods, and this was facilitated by Frankfurt's geographical position between Darmstadt and Homburg, two pleasant towns that were on good terms with each other because their ruling houses were related. I grew accustomed to living on the road and wandered back and forth between the mountains and the plain like a messenger. Either alone or in company I often traversed my native town as if it did not concern me, would dine at one of the big inns in Passage Lane, and afterwards proceed on my way. I felt more than ever oriented toward the open world and untamed nature. While walking I would intone strange hymns and dithyrambs, one of which survives under the title "Wanderer's Storm Song." I sang this semi-nonsense passionately to myself when I encountered some bad weather on the way and had to head into it.

No one had stirred my idle heart. I consciously avoided all closer relationships with young women, and was so unaware and inattentive that I did not realize a loving genius was secretly hovering near me. A tender, amiable woman quietly cherished an affection for me, which I did not perceive and so acted the more cheerful and charming when in her beneficent presence. Only several years later, indeed after her death, did I learn of this secret, heavenly love, and in a way that necessarily affected me deeply. But I was innocent, and could mourn an

innocent creature purely and sincerely, and all the more beautifully since the discovery came at a time when, quite without passion, I could fortunately live only for myself and my intellectual interests.

But as usual, at the time when grief over Frederica's situation oppressed me, I looked again to poetry for help. I continued my old poetic confessions, hoping to receive inner absolution in return for this self-tormenting penance. The two Maries in *Götz von Berlichingen* and *Clavigo* and the two men of inferior quality that play their lovers may well have resulted from these remorseful thoughts.

However, wounds and illnesses are quickly conquered in youth, because a healthy system of organic life can substitute for a sick one and give it time to heal. So, fortunately, physical exercises offered themselves very beneficially on many favorable occasions, and in various ways I was stirred to take heart again and find new pleasure and enjoyment in life. Horseback riding gradually supplanted those rambling, melancholy, wearisome, really slow and pointless trips on foot. It was a faster, merrier, more comfortable means of reaching one's goal. My younger companions reintroduced fencing; but notably at the onset of winter a new world opened for us, when I suddenly decided to learn to skate, which I had never attempted. In a short time, by dint of practice, study, and persistence I made as much progress as is necessary for enjoying a lively and jolly turn on the ice with others, without actually intending to distinguish oneself.

We were indebted to Klopstock for this new activity also. His enthusiasm for this felicitous exercise was confirmed by private report, while his odes give incontrovertible proof of it. I remember very clearly that I leapt out of bed one bright, frosty morning, reciting these verses:

Happy just from feeling my own healthy glow,
Far down there I've whitened, next the lake's cold shore,
The water's covering of crystal.

How the winter day, in dawning, gently
Lights the lake! Luminous frost, like to stars,
Over it all the night has strewn!

My hesitant and wavering resolve immediately became firm, and I flew straight to a spot where a late beginner like me could, with some propriety, start practicing. And truly! this manner of expending one's energy deserved Klopstock's recommendation. It brings us close to purest childhood, it invites a youth to enjoy all his suppleness, and it is a means of staving off the immobility of old age. We became inordinately fond of this pleasure. We were not satisfied just to spend a splendid sunny day on the ice, but kept on gliding until late at night. For whereas other exertions tire the body, these lend it renewed buoyancy. The full

moon emerging from the clouds over the darkened expanse of meadows now frozen into ice fields, the night breezes rustling against us as we moved, the dull thundering of the ice as it sank with the receding waters, and the strange resonance of our own movements were all perfectly reminiscent of scenes in Ossian. One friend after the other would let a Klopstockian ode resound in a declamatory chant, and, when we met in the dusky light, unfeigned praise would ring out for the founding father of our pleasure.

And should not he become an immortal
 Who for us a health and joy invented
 Which no steed, running full tilt, ever gave,
 Which e'en the ball itself does not have.

Such is the gratitude a man earns when he can ennoble some mundane activity with intellectual spirit, and popularize it in a worthy fashion.

And just as talented children, whose mental gifts are developed to an astonishing degree at an early age, will return to the simplest boyish games if only allowed to do so, we all too easily forgot that we had a more serious calling. Yet it was precisely this often solitary exercise, this gentle swaying about in an undefined space, that awoke many inner desires that had been asleep in me for a while, and I am indebted to such hours for the speedier development of some prior plans.

For some time my imagination and curiosity had been occupied with the darker centuries of German history. It was my much cherished thought to dramatize Götz von Berlichingen in his contemporary setting. Therefore I diligently read the main authors, and gave great attention to Datt's work *De pace publica*;⁵⁰ I studied it eagerly to the end and tried hard to visualize the curious details. These efforts, which were directed to moral and esthetic purposes, could also be used for another goal, that of giving me sufficient historical background for my forthcoming visit to Wetzlar. The supreme court there had originated in the wake of the imperial proclamation of public peace, and its history could be viewed as a significant guide through the confusion of German events. For, after all, conditions in the law courts and the army furnish the best clue to the condition of any realm. Even though finances are thought to have very important influence, they have much less bearing on the matter: if the nation needs funds, the individual citizen can simply be deprived of what he has laboriously scraped together and put aside, and so the state is always rich enough.

There is no great significance to what I encountered in Wetzlar, but perhaps a more serious interest can be aroused if I am permitted to give a cursory account of the supreme court's history and explain the unfavorable moment at which I arrived there.

The lords of the earth are lords primarily because in time of war they

surround themselves with the bravest and most resolute men, and in time of peace with those who are the wisest and most just. A German emperor's retinue also included a legal body of this kind which always accompanied him on his progress through the realm. But nothing—neither such conscientiousness, nor the Swabian law code of southern Germany, nor the Saxon code of the north, neither the judges appointed to uphold these laws nor the agreements between equals, neither the arbiters recognized by treaty nor the amicable settlements negotiated by the clergy—could quell the irascible spirit of knightly feuding. This had been aroused, nourished, and made customary among the Germans by internal dissension, foreign campaigns (particularly the crusades), and even by legal procedures. The emperor and the more powerful estates of the realm found these harassments most vexatious; on account of them the lesser nobles were a burden to each other and, when banded together, a burden to the greater nobles also. Action against external foes was paralyzed, and internal order was disturbed. Moreover, much of the nation was still oppressed by the secret Vehmlic tribunal,⁵¹ the extent of whose atrocities can be imagined if one considers that it degenerated into a secret police and eventually was under the control of private persons.

Many vain attempts were made to curb these wrongs until at last the estates urgently proposed a court paid for by themselves. No doubt their intentions were very good, but this did indicate an extension of the estates' authority and a restriction of the imperial power. The matter was delayed under Frederick III, but his son Maximilian gave way, being threatened by external foes. He appointed the chief judge, while the estates sent the associate judges. There were to be twenty-four of them, but at the beginning twelve had to suffice.

The first and perpetual basic defect of the supreme court was a general error that plagues human undertakings: inadequate means were used to achieve a great end. The number of associate judges was too small. How could they accomplish the difficult, complex task? But who was to press for an adequate staff? The emperor could hardly be expected to favor an institution that seemed to work more against him than for him, and he had far greater cause to develop his own court of law—his own council. On the other hand, if one considers the estates' interests, their only concern was to stanch the blood. Whether the wound healed was less important to them. And now, to top it off, a new outlay of money! Apparently they had not realized that on account of this institution every prince would have to increase the number of his attendants, though of course for a decided purpose—but who likes to spend money on necessities? Everyone's dearest wish is to have useful things free of charge.

At first the associate judges were expected to live on their fees, and

then the estates awarded them a small allowance; both were miserable. But willing, capable, hard-working men were found to meet the great and obvious need, and the court was established. It is a moot question whether it was understood that the intention here was to relieve, rather than cure, the evil, or whether, as in similar cases, the vain hope was entertained of accomplishing much with little. Suffice it to say, the court served more as a pretext for punishing the mischief-makers than as a means for preventing injustice. But it had hardly convened when it developed a strength of its own, felt the loftiness of its position, and recognized its political importance. Now it sought to win itself a more decided prestige through some striking actions: the judges quickly worked through everything that could be, and had to be, summarily settled, such as decisions for the moment, or whatever else could be easily adjudicated; and so they impressed the whole empire with their effectiveness and worth. However, the affairs of great weight, the actual lawsuits, remained behind schedule, and that was no misfortune. The state's only concern is to make possessions certain and secure; it can pay less heed to someone's legal right to possession. Therefore no harm could come to the empire from the enormous, constantly swelling number of delayed law suits. Measures had been taken against people who used violence, and such people could be dealt with conclusively. As for the others, who were fighting legal battles for their possessions, they lived and enjoyed themselves, or suffered want, as the case might be. They died, they were ruined, they were reconciled. All of that, however, was merely the happiness or misery of individual families, while the empire itself was gradually made tranquil. Legal use of force against the disobedient had been placed in the hands of the supreme court; had the court been able to excommunicate, that would have been more effective.

Since the number of associate judges was sometimes increased, sometimes decreased, since there were many interruptions, and since the court was moved from one place to another, its arrears, its files accumulated endlessly. Then in a war emergency a part of the archive was removed for safekeeping from Speyer to Aschaffenburg, a part to Worms, and a third part fell into the hands of the French, who believed they had captured a national archive but later would gladly have gotten rid of this jumble of papers if only someone had been willing to transport them.

The capable men assembled at the Westphalian peace conference realized quite well what sort of lever was needed to dislodge that Sisyphean load. Now fifty judges were to be appointed; but that number was never attained, and again, because the expense seemed too great, half as many had to suffice. If only all the interested parties could have seen their advantage in the matter, the whole task could certainly have

been accomplished. Approximately one hundred thousand florins were required to provide salaries for twenty-five associate judges, and how easily Germany could have raised double that sum! The proposal to endow the supreme court with confiscated ecclesiastical properties did not win approval, for how could the two branches of religion agree to this sacrifice? The Catholics did not want to lose still more, and each Protestant wanted to use his gains for internal objectives. Here, too, the splitting of the realm into two religious parties had a very bad influence in many respects. The estates' interest in this court of theirs constantly diminished. The more powerful ones tried to disengage themselves from the organization; there was an increasingly lively demand for the privilege of not being haled before any superior court; the larger estates fell behind in their payments, while the smaller, who in any case believed their assessments were too high, delayed as long as possible.

Therefore it was difficult to raise the necessary money for paying salaries when due. Out of this arose a new task, and a new waste of time, for the court; it was one which had formerly been the responsibility of the so-called annual "visitations." Princes personally, or their counselors, would go to the site of the court for a mere few weeks or months to examine the money chests, determine the arrears, and assume the task of forcible collection. At the same time, they were authorized to remedy any breakdown that threatened the legal or court proceedings, or any abuse that was about to creep in. They were supposed to uncover and eliminate the institution's defects; but only later was it a part of their duty to investigate and punish the personal crimes of the judges. Because litigants always strive to keep their hopes alive just a moment longer and consequently seek and invoke an ever higher instance, the visitors also developed into an appellate court. At first the hope was for readjustments in well-defined, obvious cases, but eventually it was for postponement and endless prolongation of the discord in all cases. Also playing a role in this were appeals to the Imperial Diet and the efforts of both religious parties to counterbalance, if not actually outweigh, each other.

However, when one thinks of what this law court could have been without these hindrances, these disturbing and destructive restrictions, one can see no limit to its remarkable and important development. Had it been staffed at the very beginning with an adequate number of men, and had the latter been assured of a sufficient livelihood, then the influence attained by this group with its German thoroughness and efficiency would have become huge and vast. These men would really have merited the honorary title "Amphictyones"⁵² which had been awarded to them just rhetorically. Indeed they could have raised them-

selves to the position of an intermediary respected both by the sovereign and his subordinates.

But far from having any such great influence, the court just dragged along on its wretched way, except perhaps for a short time under Charles V and before the Thirty Years' War. Often it is hard to comprehend how men could be found to perform this thankless, dreary task. But a person who is good at his daily work will put up with it, even if he cannot clearly see that anything will come of it. Germans especially have this persevering disposition, and so for three centuries some of the worthiest men attended to these tasks and affairs. A representative gallery of their portraits would arouse interest and instill courage even today.

For it is precisely at such anarchistic times that the capable man walks with firmest tread, and the well-intentioned man has his proper place. Thus, for example, the memory of Fürstenberg's⁵³ directorship was still revered; and it was with the death of this excellent man that the period of those many ruinous abuses began.

But the original and only source of all these later and earlier defects was the insufficiency of staff. It was ordained that the associate judges should present cases in a definite series and a stipulated order. Each judge knew when it was his turn and when the cases he was responsible for would come up; he could work toward that and prepare himself. However, arrears were unhappily piling up, and it became a necessary expedient to select the more important cases and present them out of sequence. When there is a throng of significant cases it is hard to judge whether one cause is more important than another, and the very act of choosing implies favoritism. Then another dubious situation arose: the referendary plagued the court and himself with a difficult, complicated case which in the end no one wanted to decide. The parties had become reconciled, had come to terms, died, or changed their minds. Consequently it was resolved that no cases would be taken up unless urged by the litigants. The court wanted to be convinced of the parties' continuing persistence, and this opened the way to the worst malfeasance, for a person who recommends his case must recommend it to some individual, and would not the best choice be the judge in charge of it? It was impossible to follow regulations and keep the identity of this judge secret, for when so many subalterns were involved, how could he remain in hiding? While requesting acceleration, one can also surely ask for favor. The very fact that one pursues one's case is an indication that one considers it just. Perhaps one will not act directly; certainly, one first approaches subordinates. When these are won over, the way is clear for all sorts of intrigues and bribes.

Emperor Joseph, both on his own initiative and in imitation of Fred-

erick, first turned his attention to arms and justice. He studied the supreme court, and neither its traditional injustices nor later abuses escaped his notice. Here, too, things were to be stirred and shaken up, and reformed. Without inquiring whether it was in his best imperial interest, and without foreseeing the possibility of a happy result, he proposed a visitation and began it overhastily. No proper visitation had been accomplished for one hundred and sixty-six years. A vast jumble of documents lay there in a heap which grew larger by the year, since the seventeen associate judges could not even cope with current business. Of the twenty thousand law suits that had accumulated, only sixty could be disposed of annually, whereas double that number were always added. The visitors were faced with no small number of appeals—some said there were fifty thousand of them. Moreover many abuses hindered the court proceedings, and, worst of all, the personal crimes of several associate judges loomed in the background.

The visitation had already been underway for several years at the time I was scheduled to go to Wetzlar. The accused judges were suspended, and the investigation had made some progress. Since masters and connoisseurs of German constitutional law could not pass up this opportunity to demonstrate their insights and devote them to the common good, several thorough, well-intentioned books had appeared, and anyone with some rudimentary knowledge could be thoroughly instructed by them. If one took this occasion to review the imperial constitution and the writings that treat of it, one could not fail to notice that scholars were primarily attracted to the monstrous condition of this totally diseased organism, which was only kept alive by a miracle. For worthy German diligence, which spent itself on the collection and discussion of details rather than on results, found an inexhaustible stimulus to new activity in this. Whether it was the empire as opposed to the emperor, the lesser to the greater estates, or the Catholics to the Protestants, there was always the obligatory variety of opinions reflecting the various interests, and always the opportunity for new conflicts and contradictions.

Since I had formed as clear an idea as possible of all these older and newer conditions, I could not really anticipate a very pleasurable sojourn in Wetzlar. I was not charmed with the prospect of finding, in this well-situated but small and badly built town, a dual world: the old, traditional, native one plus a strange new one commissioned to examine it closely—a court both judging and judged. I knew that many an inhabitant would still be fearful and worried about becoming involved in the decreed investigation, and that prominent persons, long looked upon as worthies, had been convicted of the most disgraceful misdeeds and assigned a shameful punishment. All that together made the saddest picture, and I was not inspired to penetrate more deeply into an affair

which seemed not only complex in itself but also much confused now by misdeeds.

When, after some hesitation, I was led into this region, it was more by a desire for new surroundings than by any thirst for knowledge. I believed I could predict that I would find nothing especially educational there, except for German civil and constitutional law, and that I would have to forgo all poetic communication. But how astonished I was when, instead of a morose society, a third academic life rose up to meet me. At a large table d'hôte in an inn I met almost all the legation subalterns at once, and they were lively young men. They gave me a friendly reception, and on the very first day I discovered that they had brightened their midday gatherings with a bit of romantic make-believe. Namely, they represented themselves, with much wit and lustiness, as a table of medieval knights. At the head sat the commander-in-chief, at his side the chancellor, and then the most important officials. Then followed the knights, according to seniority. But if strangers entered, they had to accept the lowest seat; and the conversation was largely incomprehensible to them because the language of the group, besides containing chivalric expressions, was enriched with many allusions. Each man was assigned a chivalric name, along with an epithet. They called me "Götz von Berlichingen," or "the Sincere One," the first of which I had earned by my interest in this staunch German patriarch, and the second by my whole-hearted, devoted affection for the excellent men I met. During my stay I became quite indebted to Count von Kielmannsegg,⁵⁴ the most serious of them all, and a very capable and dependable man. Von Goué⁵⁵ was a man difficult to decipher and describe: he had a robust, heavy-set, Hanoverian figure, and was quietly meditative, with talents of many kinds. We suspected him of being the illegitimate son of some great person, and he liked a certain aura of mystery, for he would conceal his dearest wishes and projects with various eccentricities. He was the real soul of this curious knightly league, though he had never striven for the position of commander. When, just at this time, the knights lacked a chief, he preferred to let another be chosen, and exercised his influence through him. He was also able to give a twist to various little incidents so that they would seem significant and suitable for acting out in fabulous form. Yet one was never aware of any serious purpose in all this. He merely wanted some action, some relief from the boredom that he and his colleagues naturally felt on account of the delays of their business, and some way to fill the vacuum, were it only with cobwebs. Moreover this game of mythical travesty was played with apparent great seriousness, no one being permitted to scoff when a certain mill was designated a castle and the miller its lord, or when *The Four Sons of Aymon*⁵⁶ was declared a canonical book and sections of it were respectfully read aloud at cer-

emonies. The dubbing to knighthood itself was accompanied by traditional symbols borrowed from several chivalric orders. Another main source of jests was their treatment of the obvious as though it were a secret: something would be carried on publicly and yet no one was supposed to mention it. The list of all the knights was printed with as much decorum as a calendar of the Imperial Diet, and when some families dared to mock and declare the whole affair absurd and ridiculous, there would be no end of intriguing until, as punishment, a dignified husband or near relative had been persuaded to join and accept knighthood. Then there would be much malicious rejoicing over the annoyance of his family members.

Intertwined with this chivalric carrying-on was another strange order that was meant to be philosophical and mystical and had no actual name. Its first degree was called the "transition," the second the "transition of the transition," the third the "transition of the transition to the transition," and the fourth the "transition of the transition to the transition of the transition." It was the duty of the adepts to interpret the lofty meaning of this series, and they did it as directed by a printed booklet, in which these strange terms were explained, or rather, amplified, in a still stranger manner. Attending to these matters was their favorite way of wasting time. Behrisch's foolishness and Lenz's perversity seemed to have joined forces here, and I must repeat that not the trace of a purpose was to be found behind all these masks.

I was very glad to act as their adviser in this nonsense, and began by bringing order into the pericopes from *The Four Sons of Aymon* and making suggestions about how they were to be read aloud at festivals and ceremonies. I was also good at reciting them myself with great emphasis. Yet I had done things like this earlier to the point of satiety, and missed my circle in Frankfurt and Darmstadt. Therefore I was very happy to find Gotter,⁵⁷ who sincerely liked me and became my companion; and I returned him my cordial good will. His way of thinking was sensitive, clear, and cheerful, and his talent was developed and regulated. He took pains to achieve a French elegance, and he delighted in the kind of English literature that treats of moral and agreeable subjects. We spent many pleasant hours together in the mutual exchange of knowledge, plans, and interests. He had connections with the group in Göttingen and stimulated me to compose many small works, especially by requesting some of my poems for Boie's *Almanac*.⁵⁸

Through this I came into some contact with that association of talented young men who afterwards were very influential in manifold ways. The two Counts Stolberg, Bürger, Voss, Hölty,⁵⁹ and others had congregated in faith and spirit around Klopstock, whose influence was felt on every side. In this constantly expanding circle of German poets there also developed, beside manifold poetic virtues, an attitude to which I

cannot assign an actual name. It could be called a need for independence, which is something that always arises in times of peace, precisely when people are actually not dependent. In wartime rude force is borne as well as possible, and it does not damage a person morally, only physically and economically. Duress is a disgrace to no one, and there is no shame in being a timeserver. One becomes accustomed to suffer at the hands of both friend and foe, and one only has wishes, not sentiments. In times of peace, however, the human love of freedom comes increasingly to the fore, and the freer one is, the freer one wants to be. One is intolerant of all authority. We want no constraint, no one is to know constraint, and in beautiful souls this morbidly sensitive feeling assumes the form of a demand for justice. This was the spirit, the attitude, that manifested itself everywhere at that time, and though very few were actually being oppressed, these too were to be delivered from the incidental oppression. Thus a kind of moral warfare broke out, with individuals interfering in governmental affairs, and while the beginnings were laudable, the end results were incalculably unfortunate.

By favoring the Calas family⁶⁰ with his protection, Voltaire caused a great sensation and won honor for himself. As far as Germany was concerned, Lavater's campaign against the provincial governor⁶¹ had been, if possible, even more striking and important. The esthetic tendency forged ahead, combined with youthful courage, and young men who had just completed the studies that would make them eligible for public office now began to act as if they were supervisors over the officials, and the time approached when dramatists and novelists would prefer to seek their villains among ministers and their staffs. Out of this arose a half-imaginary, half-real world of actions and reactions, in the midst of which we later experienced those very vehement denunciations and provocations that the authors of periodicals and newspapers, with a kind of fury, permitted themselves in the name of justice. Their efforts were all the harder to resist because they made the public believe it was itself the true court of law—nonsense! No public has any executive power, and in dismembered Germany public opinion could neither help nor harm anyone.

To be sure, among us young men there was no hint of anything objectionable in this vein; but we were taken with a somewhat similar idea, which, being a mixture of poetry, morality, and noble ambition, did us no harm, but neither did it bear any fruit.

Klopstock had provided a wonderful stimulus with his *Battle of Arminius* and its dedication to Joseph II. Those Germans who had liberated themselves from the Romans were depicted as being splendid and powerful, and this was an image very well qualified to awaken the nation's feelings of self-worth. However, patriotism in peacetime really consists in no more than everyone's sweeping in front of his own door, attending

to his own business, and learning his own lesson, so as to keep the house in order. Therefore the patriotic feeling aroused by Klopstock had no object to practice on. Frederick had upheld the honor of a part of Germany against a world of allies, and it was the privilege of every segment of the nation to participate in the victory by applauding and venerating this great prince. But where to go with that feeling of warlike defiance that had been aroused? Which direction was it to take, and what result would it bring forth? At first only poetic form, and those bardic songs, which afterwards were so often reviled and derided, accumulated on account of this impulse, this stimulus. Next, since there were no external foes to fight, imaginary tyrants were invented, and the princes and their servitors had to provide the models for these, at first just in general, but then gradually in particular. At this point, poetry joined hands fervently with that meddling in the administration of justice I have criticized above, and it is remarkable to see how some poems of the time are completely dominated by the idea that all authority, whether of the monarch or of aristocrats, must be abolished.

As for me, I continued to use poetry for the expression of my feelings and fancies. Little poems like "The Wanderer" were written at this time, and were accepted by the *Poetic Almanac of Göttingen*. But if there were any traces of that mania in me, I set about liberating myself from them shortly afterwards in *Götz von Berlichingen*, wherein I portrayed this honest, right-minded man in those disorderly times as he resolves to replace, if need be, law and executive power, but despairs when his acknowledged and respected sovereign considers him suspicious, and indeed disloyal.

Klopstock's odes did not really introduce Nordic mythology into German poetry, just the names of its divinities. But although I ordinarily was glad to make use of whatever was presented to me, I could not persuade myself to use these, and for the following reasons: I had long ago encountered the tales of the Edda in the introduction to Mallet's *Danish History*,⁶² and had immediately mastered them. They were among the stories that I was happiest to tell when called on at a party. Herder introduced me to the Resenius edition⁶³ and made me better acquainted with the heroic sagas. But in spite of my esteem for these things, none of them seemed to be within the scope of my poetic abilities. While they were a splendid spur to my imaginative powers, they quite evaded observation with my senses. The mythology of the Greeks, on the other hand, had been transformed by the world's greatest artists into visible, easily conceivable figures which we could view in a throng. I was generally reluctant to use gods, because I still felt they were domiciled outside of nature, which was what I knew how to imitate. What, then, should have moved me to replace Jupiter with Odin, and Mars with Thor, and to introduce such misty images, really nothing

more than verbal music, into my poems instead of those precisely circumscribed figures from the south? In one respect they were quite close to the equally formless Ossianic heroes, only more robust and gigantic; in another, I associated them with fairytales of the cheerful kind, for there was a humorous strain through all of Nordic myth that I liked extremely well and considered noteworthy. It was the only myth I knew that refused to take itself seriously and let its curious dynasty of gods be opposed by fantastic giants, sorcerers, and monsters whose sole purpose is to thwart the governance of these supreme personages, to trick them, and to threaten them at last with an ignominious, inevitable downfall.

The fables of India, which I first encountered in Dapper's *Travels*,⁶⁴ won my interest in a similar, though not identical, way, and I was most delighted to add them also to my stock of fairytales. I was especially successful with my retelling of "The Altar of Rama,"⁶⁵ and of all the many persons in this tale the ape Hanuman⁶⁶ remained my public's favorite. But these deformed and outsized monsters could not give me real poetic satisfaction either. They were too far removed from the truth toward which my mind was unceasingly striving.

But it so happened that a most splendid force arose to protect my feeling for beauty from all these inartistic fancies. It is always a happy era in literature when great works of the past are unearthed again to become the order of the day, because then they produce a completely fresh effect. Homer's light began to shine anew for us, and in a very timely way, because it was just the right moment for such a reappearance. The constant references to nature eventually taught people also to view the works of the ancients in this context. What various travelers had done for the elucidation of the Holy Scriptures, was accomplished by others for Homer. Guys⁶⁷ led the way, and Wood⁶⁸ gave impetus to the enterprise. A Göttingen review⁶⁹ of the at first very rare original text acquainted us with these intentions and told us how far they had been accomplished. Now we no longer saw just turgid, exaggerated heroics in those poems, but the true reflection of a living past, and this we tried hard to bring within our ken. At the same time, to be sure, we did not completely agree when it was asserted that a correct understanding of the Homeric characters was contingent on acquainting oneself with savage tribes and their customs as these were described for us in travel accounts of the new world. Undeniably, both the Europeans and the Asiatics in the Homeric poems are portrayed as having already attained a high degree of culture, perhaps a higher one than they actually enjoyed at the time of the Trojan War. But that maxim was in harmony with the prevailing nature creed, and so we did not dispute it.

In spite of all these studies relating to anthropology in the higher

sense, and to poetry in the most intimate and lovely one, every day I still came up against the fact that I was in Wetzlar. From hour to hour I was interrupted by the sounds of conversation about the state of the visitation and its constantly increasing difficulties, or about the discovery of new crimes. The Holy Roman Empire had gathered here again, not for mere external ceremonies, but to conduct a most thorough investigation. But at this juncture, too, I could not help thinking of that half-empty dining hall on coronation day, when the invited guests stayed away because they were too exalted. They were meeting here, to be sure, but still worse symptoms could not be ignored. The lack of cohesiveness in the whole body, the opposing actions of its parts, were constantly in evidence, and it was no secret that the princes had privately passed the word among themselves: should we not see whether this would be an opportunity to wrest some advantage from the sovereign?

I was a young man who wanted what was good and was training myself inwardly toward this end; any honest person will understand that it made a bad impression on me to hear, in minute detail, all these anecdotes about negligence and omissions, injustice and bribes. Whence, under such circumstances, should come respect for law and judges? But even assuming the greatest confidence in the effect of the visitation, and belief that it would fulfill its lofty commission completely, still there was no profit here for a light-hearted youth bent on striding forward in life. The formalities of the process were in themselves merely tactics for delay. If anyone wanted to take some meaningful action, he would always have to serve someone in the wrong, a defendant, and be skilled in the fencer's art of making twisting and parrying strokes.

Since I was too distracted to succeed in any esthetic works, I lost myself time and again in esthetic speculations; and indeed all theorizing is an indication either that one's creative powers are deficient or that they are at a standstill. As earlier with Merck, so now with Gotter I sometimes attempted to discover maxims that would serve as guidance for one's production. But success eluded both them and me. Merck was a sceptic and eclectic, while Gotter held to those examples that most appealed to him. Sulzer⁷⁰ proclaimed his theory, which was more for the art lover than the artist. From his perspective, moral effects are the prime requisite, and this immediately brings discord between producers and consumers, for a good work of art can and will have moral consequences, it is true, but to demand moral goals of an artist is to ruin his handiwork.

For some years I had been diligently reading at intervals, though not studying systematically, what the ancients had said about these weighty matters. Aristotle, Cicero, Longinus, not one of them was overlooked, but this did not help me, for all these men took for granted an amount

of experience that I lacked. They led me into a world that was infinitely rich in works of art, they expatiated on the merits of excellent poets and orators who are now mostly known to us only by name, and they convinced me all too clearly that we cannot think about things unless they lie before us in great abundance. One must accomplish something oneself, nay, make mistakes, before it is possible to appreciate one's own abilities and those of others. My acquaintance with many of the treasures from those ancient times was, after all, still just a schoolboy's book knowledge and by no means live, whereas it was obvious, especially with the most celebrated orators, that these men had educated themselves in the very midst of life. One could never speak about their characteristic qualities as artists without simultaneously mentioning their personal characteristics. This seemed to be less the case with poets, but everywhere nature and art came in contact only through life, and so the sum of all my thinking and contemplation remained my old resolution to study inner and outer nature, and just to let it lead the way as I lovingly imitated it.

These influences, which gave me no rest by day or night, were supplemented by two large, indeed enormous topics of a richness I only had to appreciate to a certain extent in order to produce something of significance. These were the older era, when Götz von Berlichingen lived, and modern times, whose sad flowering is depicted in *Werther*.

I have already spoken of my historical preparation for the first work; now let us discuss the ethical grounds for the second.

That resolution to let my inner nature follow its own course and to let outer nature influence me in its own capacity brought me to the strange circumstances under which *Werther* was conceived and written. I was trying to free myself inwardly of everything alien, to observe external things lovingly, and to let all beings, from the human down to those barely perceptible, have their effect on me, each in its own way. Thus there arose a marvelous feeling of kinship with individual objects in nature, and a heartfelt accord or harmony with the whole, so that every alternation affected me deeply, whether it was of places or regions, or of times of day and seasons, or of whatever else might occur. The artist's gaze joined the poet's, while the beautiful rural landscape, brightened by its friendly river, inclined me even more to solitude and fostered my quiet but wide-ranging contemplations.

But ever since I had left that family circle in Sesenheim, and then my circle of friends in Frankfurt and Darmstadt, there had been an emptiness in my bosom that I could not fill. Consequently I found myself in a state where, in order to take us unawares and bring all good resolutions to naught, an affection only needs to approach in a light disguise.

And since the writer has now arrived at this stage of his undertaking,

this book will become what it is really supposed to be. It was not declared to be an independent entity, but was meant to fill the gaps in an author's life, to complete many fragments, and to preserve the memory of bold enterprises now lost and forgotten. What is already done, however, cannot, and should not, be repeated. Also, it would now be in vain for the poet to try to summon up his dimmed mental powers, useless for him to ask them to revive the sweet attachment that so greatly enriched his sojourn in the Lahn valley. Fortunately, his guiding genius provided for that earlier by prompting him, in his capable youth, to capture and describe the recent past, and to be bold enough to set it before the public at a favorable moment. It probably needs no further explanation that I am referring here to the little book *Werther*. However, I shall by and by reveal a few things about the persons depicted in it, and about the sentiments portrayed.

Among the young men attached to the legation for advance training in their future careers was one whom we usually called simply "the Fiancé."⁷¹ He was distinguished by his calm evenness of manner, the clarity of his views, and the precision of his actions and statements. His cheerful willingness, his unremitting diligence recommended him so highly to his superiors that they promised soon to find him a position. On the strength of this he ventured to become engaged to a young woman who in every respect suited his disposition and desires. After her mother's death she had proved very efficient in managing a large family of younger children, and all alone had sustained her father⁷² in his widowhood. Therefore her future husband could hope that she would do the same for him and his progeny, and could anticipate assured domestic happiness. Everyone, even with no such personal goals in mind, declared her to be a desirable young woman. She was of the type that is created to arouse general approval rather than inspire violent passions. A slightly built, nicely shaped figure; a pure, healthy nature and the happy, busy interest in life which goes with it; unpretentious performance of daily duties—all of these were hers. It always warmed my heart to observe such qualities, and I was happy to associate with those who possessed them. And if I did not always have occasion to render them genuine service, I would share with them, rather than with others, the enjoyment of those innocent pleasures which are always at youth's disposal and can be had without great effort and expense. Furthermore, since it is well known that women dress only for each other and never tire of adding to their finery among themselves, I much preferred girls like her, whose simple cleanliness was a tacit assurance to their male friend, their fiancé, that they really dressed only for him, and that their whole life could continue like this without great ceremony and expense.

Such persons are not overconcerned with themselves. They have

time to observe the world around them and enough composure to adapt and conform to it. Without great effort, they become wise and understanding, and need few books for their cultural development. Thus the fiancée. Her betrothed, being of a thoroughly upright and trusting disposition, soon introduced her to everyone he esteemed. Because he spent the greatest part of the day zealously attending to business, he was glad to see his intended, after household duties were done, amuse herself otherwise and enjoy sociable strolls and country picnics with male and female friends. Lotte—for obviously that is her name!—was unassuming in a double sense: first, she was inclined by nature more to general kindness than to particular affections, and then, after all, she had decided on a man worthy of herself, who evidently had declared himself ready to join his destiny to hers for life. The atmosphere around her was most cheerful. Indeed, pleasant as it is to see parents lavishing constant care on their children, there is something still more beautiful about siblings doing the same for siblings. In the former case we believe we are mainly seeing natural instinct and civil custom, in the latter, free choice of the heart.

The new arrival, quite free of any ties, felt unconcerned in the presence of a girl who, since she was already spoken for, would not interpret his most agreeable services as wooing, and thus could take the more delight in them. He calmly let matters proceed, but was soon so entangled and enchained, yet also treated so trustingly and amicably by the young couple, that he no longer recognized himself. Idle and dreamy because the present did not satisfy him, he found what he was lacking in this female friend who, by living for the whole year, seemed to live just for the present moment. She was glad to have him as a companion, and soon he could not do without being near her, for she was his link to the everyday world, and so they were soon inseparable companions on the fields and meadows, in the vegetable and flower gardens of this extensive household. The fiancé, for his part, was also present, if his duties permitted. All three had grown accustomed to each other without meaning to, and did not know how it had come about that they were indispensable to each other. So, right through the splendid summer, they lived a genuine German idyll, for which the fertile land provided the prose, and pure affection the poetry. Wandering through fields of ripe grain, they took refreshment from the dewy morning; the song of the lark, the call of the quail were pleasant sounds; hours filled with heat followed; tremendous thunderstorms came up, but we just huddled together, and many a little family irritation was easily soothed with unfailing love. And so one ordinary day followed another, and all seemed to be festival days: the whole calendar should have been printed in red. I will be understood by anyone who remembers what was predicted for the happy-unhappy lover of the new *Héloïse*: “And, sitting

at the feet of his beloved, he will card hemp, and he will wish to continue carding hemp, today, tomorrow, and the next day, indeed for his whole life."⁷³

Only a little, but perhaps as much as necessary, can now be said about a young man whose name has subsequently been mentioned only too often. It was Jerusalem,⁷⁴ the son of the liberal and sensitive theologian. He too was attached to a legation. An agreeable figure of middle height, well built, with a face more round than oval, he had soft, calm features and everything else that goes to make up a handsome blond youth, also blue eyes that could be called interesting rather than expressive. His clothing was of the kind customary among the Low Germans, imitated from the English: a blue tailcoat, buff-colored vest and breeches, and boots with brown tops. The author never visited or received him, although he met him occasionally at friends' places. The young man's statements were unremarkable, but amiable. He took part in the most varied creative endeavors, but especially liked drawings and sketches that caught the quiet character of lonely areas. On these occasions he would pass around etchings by Gessner and encourage us amateurs to take these as our model. He entered seldom or not at all into that nonsensical chivalric masquerade, but instead lived to himself and with his own ideas. There was talk about his pronounced passion for the wife of a friend, although they were never seen together in public. In general there was not much to be said about him except that he studied English literature. As the son of a prosperous man he neither had to devote himself anxiously to his work nor urgently seek immediate placement in a position.

Those Gessner etchings increased our delight and interest in rural subjects, and our more intimate circle enthusiastically received a little poem which henceforth took our whole attention. *The Deserted Village* by Goldsmith could not fail to have great appeal for everyone at that particular stage of cultural development and in that mental environment. Everything we liked to feast our eyes on, everything we loved, esteemed, and passionately looked for in the present, so as to participate in it with youthful energy, was portrayed here, not as alive and active, but as a faded, bygone existence: festivals and holidays in the country, church dedications and annual fairs; then, under the village linden tree, the grave assembly of elders, which has been pushed aside by the more vigorous young people in their desire to dance; and finally the participation of the cultivated classes. How proper these pleasures seemed, held in bounds as they were by a good country parson who could immediately adjust and settle everything that threatened to get out of hand and lead to fights and quarrels. Here, too, we found our honest Wakefield again in his familiar sphere, not in the flesh, but only as a shadow recalled by the elegiac poet's gently lamenting tones. The very thought

behind this presentation is one of the most felicitous, once the poet has resolved to revive an innocent past with sweet melancholy. And how successful the Englishman has been, in every respect, in carrying out this agreeable project! I shared my enthusiasm for this most delightful poem with Gotter, who had better luck than I with the joint translation we undertook. I tried all too scrupulously to reproduce the nuances of the original in our language, and thus may have done justice to individual passages, but not to the whole.

If, as is said, we find our greatest happiness in longing, and if true longing is directed solely to the unattainable, then everything coincided to make this young man, whose meandering paths we are presently following, the happiest of mortals. His affection for a betrothed woman, his efforts to gain and adapt masterpieces of foreign literature for our own, his attempts to imitate natural objects not only in words but also with etching point and brush, without real technique—each of these singly would have sufficed to make his heart swell and his breast tighten. But the following occurred to remove our sweetly suffering friend from this situation and created new conditions in order to agitate him anew.

Höpfner,⁷⁵ a professor of law, was located in Giessen. Merck and Schlosser recognized and respected him highly as a thinker and a worthy man, one skilled in his field. I had long wanted to make his acquaintance, and now, since those friends were planning to visit him and confer about literary topics, it was agreed that I should take the occasion to go to Giessen also. But as often happens amidst the exuberance of happy and peaceful times, we could hardly ever accomplish anything in a straightforward manner and instead, like true children, tried to wring some nonsense even out of necessary actions. Accordingly I, being the stranger, was to appear under a false identity and once again satisfy my desire to go about in disguise. One bright morning before sunrise, therefore, I strode away up the lovely valley from Wetzelar-on-Lahn, for such journeys on foot were again my chief delight. All by myself in the quietude I would invent, combine, work things through, and be glad and cheerful. I would again sort out everything that the ever-contradictory world had so awkwardly and confusedly forced on me. Having arrived at my goal, I looked for Höpfner's dwelling and knocked on his study door. When he shouted, "Enter!" I modestly approached him, saying that I was a student returning home from the university, who wished to become acquainted with the worthiest men along the way. I was prepared for his questions about my particular circumstances, and told a plausibly prosaic fairytale about myself that seemed to satisfy him. When I then identified myself as a law student, I did not carry it off badly, for I was aware of his accomplishments in the field and his current preoccupation with natural law. Yet the conversation faltered a few times, and he seemed to be expecting me to

proffer an album or take my leave. However, I managed to delay, because I was certain that Schlosser, whose punctuality was well known to me, would soon arrive. He actually did come then, and was welcomed by his friend, but only cast me a side-glance and took little notice of me. But Höpfner drew me into the conversation and showed himself to be an altogether humane, kindly man. At last I excused myself and hurried to the inn, where I exchanged a few quick words with Merck about our further plans.

My friends had resolved to invite Höpfner to a meal along with that Christian Heinrich Schmid⁷⁶ who played a role, though a very subordinate one, in the German literary world. The affair was really plotted against the latter, who was to be punished in a comical way for his many sins. When the guests were assembled in the dining room, I had the waiter ask if the gentlemen would permit me to join them. Schlosser, who was well able to assume a certain gravity of expression, was opposed to this because they did not wish to have their friendly conversation disturbed by an outsider. But the waiter insisted, and Höpfner interceded, assuring them that I was a decent enough person; so I was admitted, and at the beginning of the meal I behaved modestly and bashfully. Schlosser and Merck put themselves under no restraint and expressed their opinions about many things as frankly as though no stranger were present. The most important literary questions as well as the most notable men came under discussion. I began to act with more boldness and was not put off when Schlosser in his serious way, and Merck mockingly, made me a cutting reply. But all my arrows were directed at Schmid, sharply and surely striking those weaknesses of his that I knew so well.

I kept discreetly to my pint of table wine, but the other gentlemen ordered a better sort and did not fail to let me partake of it. After many affairs of the day had been thoroughly discussed, the conversation turned to general subjects, and we treated a question which will recur as long as there are writers, namely, whether literature is in the ascendant or descendant, in advance or retreat. This question, on which especially the old and the young, the arriving and the departing, seldom agree, was cheerfully and thoroughly discussed by us, without any stated intention of coming to a definite agreement. At last I took the floor and said: "Literatures, it seems to me, have alternating seasons like those in nature, which produce certain phenomena and repeat themselves in series. Therefore I do not believe that a literary epoch can be either totally praised or blamed. I especially dislike to see that certain talents produced by the times are very highly exalted and celebrated, whereas others are reviled and suppressed. The nightingale's throat is stimulated by spring, but so is the gullet of the cuckoo. The butterflies that are so pleasing to the eye and the gnats that so annoy

our sense of feeling are set astir by the same warm sun. If one took this fact to heart, the same laments would not be renewed every ten years, and there would not be so many vain efforts to exterminate this and that offensive thing." The company looked at me in amazement, wondering where I had acquired so much wisdom and tolerance. However, I quite calmly continued to compare literary phenomena with things in nature, and I do not know how, but I even got as far as the molluscs and was able to point out all sorts of curious facts about them. I said that these creatures undeniably had some sort of body, and even a certain form, but since they had no skeleton one really did not know what to make of them, and they were no better than animated slime; yet the sea had to have such creatures also. Since I continued the analogy overlong in order to describe the listening Schmid and his type of characterless *littérateur*, it was brought to my attention that an analogy carried too far finally has no meaning at all.—"Then I shall return to earth," I replied, "and speak of the ivy. Just as molluscs have no skeleton, the latter has no trunk, but wants to play the main role wherever it clings. It belongs on old walls, which are in ruins anyway, but is properly removed from new buildings. It drains sap from the trees, and becomes most intolerable of all to me when it covers a post with its leaves and then proclaims that this is a living trunk."

Despite their repeated reproaches about the obscurity and inapplicability of my analogies, I grew ever more vituperative about parasitical creatures and managed the affair quite well, as far as my knowledge of nature at the time permitted. I finally sang out a "Vivat!" to all independent men and a "Pereat!" to the importunate ones, took Höpfner's hand, when the meal was over, shook it hard, declared him to be the finest man in the world, and then very heartily embraced him and the others. My honest new friend really thought he was dreaming, until finally Schlosser and Merck solved the mystery. The jest, when revealed, caused general merriment, in which Schmid himself joined, once we had placated him again by acknowledging his genuine merits and showing interest in his favorite pursuits.

This sprightly introduction could not but enliven and foster the literary congress which was the real purpose of this visit. Merck, who divided his activities between esthetics, literature, and commercial ventures, had inspired Schlosser, who was discriminating, well educated, and knowledgeable in a great many fields, to edit the *Frankfurt Scholarly Review*⁷⁷ this year. They had associated themselves with Höpfner and other professors in Giessen, with a meritorious pedagogue in Darmstadt, Rector Wenck, and some other good men. Each had sufficient historical and theoretical knowledge in his field, and their understanding of the times enabled these men to work with *one* mind. The first two annual volumes of this periodical (which afterwards got into other hands) bear remarkable witness to the collaborators' breadth of understanding,

remarkable witness to the collaborators' breadth of understanding, clarity of perspective, and sincerity of will. What is humane and cosmopolitan is promoted; honest and deservedly celebrated men are defended against all kinds of importunity; their part is taken against enemies, especially pupils who, to the detriment of their teachers, misuse what has been taught them. Perhaps most interesting are the reviews of other periodicals, the *Berlin Library* and the *German Mercury*, in which the reviewers' expertise in many fields and their understanding and fairness are justly to be admired.

With respect to me, they well understood that I lacked practically all the qualities of a true reviewer. My historical knowledge lacked coherence, for the history of the world, of science, and of literature had attracted me only by individual epochs, and the topics themselves only in part and in bulk. My ability to breathe life into things and visualize them out of context allowed me to feel completely at home in a century or branch of science without having any information about antecedents or successive events. Further, I had developed a certain theoretical-practical sense which enabled me, without real philosophical coherence but with sporadic accuracy, to describe things more as they ought to have been than as they were. In addition, I had an easy grasp of matters and was pleasantly receptive to the opinions of others unless they were in direct opposition to my own convictions.

This literary group also benefited from a lively correspondence and, since the towns were in close proximity, from frequent personal negotiations. The first to read a book would become its reviewer, and sometimes a co-reviewer would be found. The matter was discussed, was linked to others of like kind, and if this finally yielded some sort of conclusion, then one person would undertake the writing. This resulted in many reviews that were both thorough and lively, both pleasant and satisfying. I very often found myself in the role of recording clerk, but my friends also permitted me to insert a few jesting comments in their compositions, and then to treat independently items of deep concern to me, provided I felt equal to them. Either in portraying or reflecting, it would be futile for me to try to evoke the actual spirit and feeling of those days again, if they were not documented for me in the most telling way by the two annual volumes of the aforementioned periodical. Excerpts of passages in which I recognize my own style may appear in the future at some appropriate place, along with similar essays.

Thanks to my lively exchange of knowledge, opinions, and convictions with Höpfner I very soon got to know him better, and cherished him. As soon as we were alone I would speak to him about subjects in his field, which indeed was also supposed to be my field, and found great natural consistency in his explanations and instruction. At that

time I was not yet clearly aware of the fact that it was very easy for me to learn things from books and conversations, but not from an uninterrupted professorial lecture. Books permitted me to linger over a passage or even to look back, which oral delivery and a teacher did not allow. Sometimes at the beginning of a lecture period a thought would seize me, and while pondering it I would miss the following one and lose the connection completely. And that had also been my experience with the law lectures, for which reason I took every opportunity to discuss things with Höpfner, who was very glad to look into my doubts and misgivings, and made up many a deficiency. Therefore I began to wish I could remain in Giessen and be instructed by him, without, however, putting too much distance between myself and my affections in Wetzlar. My two friends countered this wish, at first unconsciously, then consciously, for they both were not only in a hurry to remove themselves from here, but also had an interest in removing me from the area.

Schlosser revealed to me that he had entered first into a friendly, then a more intimate relationship with my sister, and that he was looking for an immediate position, so that he could marry her. This declaration rather took me aback, although my sister's letters should have prepared me for it long before. But we readily pass over whatever might injure our vanity, and now I first noticed that I was really jealous with regard to my sister, and it was harder to conceal this feeling from myself since our relationship had grown even closer after my return from Strassburg. How much time we had spent in exchanging information about the little romances, the love affairs and lovers' quarrels which had occurred in the meantime! And had not another new world in the imaginative sphere opened to me, into which I had to introduce her also? My own little works and a broad expanse of world literature had to be gradually presented to her. Therefore on the spur of the moment I translated for her whatever Homeric passages would easily awaken her interest. As well as I could, I read off Clarke's literal translation⁷⁸ to her in German. My prose recital usually transformed itself into metric turns and endings, and all the hindrances of the unnatural word order were removed by the liveliness with which I grasped the images and by the vigor of my expression. What I spiritedly delivered, she followed with spirit. We entertained ourselves in this fashion for many hours of the day. If, on the other hand, her social group was assembled, then there was a unanimous demand for the wolf Fenris and the ape Hanuman, and how often I had to repeat in detail the famous story about Thor and his companions being mocked by the magical giants! Therefore I have retained such a pleasant impression of all these poems that they are still some of the most cherished things my imagination can evoke. I had also drawn my sister into my relations with the Darmstadt friends, and

even my absences and journeys on foot could only tighten the bond between us, because I conversed with her in letters about every happening, immediately sent her a copy of every little poem (even when it was hardly more than an exclamation point), and promptly showed her all the letters I received and the answers I returned. All this lively movement had come to a standstill since my departure from Frankfurt, for my stay in Wetzlar was not so productive of such entertainment, and, besides, my affection for Lotte no doubt infringed on my attentions to my sister. In a word, she felt herself alone, perhaps neglected, and so was all the readier to listen to the sincere wooing of an honorable man who, serious and reserved, reliable and estimable, had shown her a warm affection of which he was normally very chary. I had no choice but to resign myself and grant my friend his good fortune, although I was self-confident enough to tell myself secretly that without the brother's absence the friend would not have prospered to this extent.

Of course it was of great importance to my friend and presumptive brother-in-law for me to return home, because I would be able to mediate a freer association, something felt as an extreme necessity by this man so suddenly smitten with a tender affection. Therefore, on going away, he exacted a promise from me to follow him shortly.

Merck had some free time just then, and I hoped he would stay longer in Giessen, giving his time to the *Frankfurt Scholarly Review*, so that I could spend a few hours of the day with my good Höpfner. But I was unable to sway him, and hatred, just like love in the case of my brother-in-law, drove Merck away from the university. For there are innate antipathies: certain people cannot bear cats, others find this and that totally repulsive, and Merck was the mortal enemy of all university students, who, to be sure, indulged in the grossest crudeness at that time in Giessen. They suited me well enough, for I could have used them as masks in one of my carnival farces, but the sight of them by day and their roaring at night put him completely out of humor. He had spent the finest days of his youth in French Switzerland, and since then had enjoyed the pleasant society of courtiers, men of the world, state officials, and cultivated littérateurs. He was sought out by many military persons who were eager to acquire intellectual culture, and so his life was spent in very cultivated circles. Therefore it is not surprising that this disorderliness annoyed him. But such a violent aversion to students was rather unbecoming to a sedate man, although he very often made me laugh with his witty descriptions of their monstrous appearance and behavior. Höpfner's invitations and my entreaties were of no avail, and I had to walk to Wetzlar with him as soon as possible.

I could hardly wait to introduce him to Lotte. But his presence in this circle was not to my advantage. Just as Mephistopheles brings no blessing anywhere he goes, so Merck's indifference to this beloved

person, while it did not make me waver, at least displeased me. I could have predicted this if I had remembered that slender, delicate persons like her, who exude a lively cheerfulness without any affectation, did not particularly appeal to him. He was quick to give his preference to the Junoesque figure of one of her female friends, and since he did not have time to develop a closer relationship with her himself, he rebuked me very bitterly for taking no interest in this majestic creature, especially since she was unattached and involved in no relationship whatever. He said that I did not understand where my advantage lay, and that he was very sorry to see me again at my favorite occupation, which was wasting time.

If it is dangerous to acquaint a friend with the virtues of one's beloved, because he might also find her charming and desirable, there is the equally great opposite danger that he can disconcert us with his negative opinion. That was not the case here, for the image of her sweetness was so deeply imprinted on me that it could not easily be erased. But his presence and his entreaties did hasten my decision to leave the town. He painted me a very charming picture of the Rhine journey he was about to take with his wife and son, and stirred a longing in me finally to see with my own eyes the places I had often enviously heard described. After he had left, then, I parted from Charlotte, perhaps with a better conscience than from Frederica, but not without pain. This relationship too had become more passionate on my part, through habit and indulgence, than it should have been. She and her betrothed, on the other hand, behaved with a cheerful moderation that could not have been finer and kinder, and accordingly I felt so secure that I forgot any danger. Yet I could not hide from the fact that this adventure was nearing its end, for the young man's advancement, on which his union with this amiable girl depended, was expected at any moment. And since a man who is at all resolute will try to accept the inevitable, I decided to go away voluntarily before I was driven off by the intolerable.

Book Thirteen

Merck and I had arranged to meet in Coblenz during the good season, at the house of Mrs. von La Roche.⁷⁹ I had sent on my belongings to Frankfurt and my travel wardrobe, by a conveyance, down the Lahn, and now I descended on foot along this lovely, curving river's greatly varied banks, free to make my own decisions but preoccupied with my feelings—a state in which nature's mute but living presence is very beneficial to us. My eye, adept at discovering the picturesque and more than picturesque beauties of the landscape, reveled in the observation of things close and distant, the bush-covered cliffs, the sunny treetops, the damp hollows, the majestic castles, and the mountain ranges beckoning from afar.

I was walking along the right bank of the river, which glided away in the sunlight at some depth and distance below me and was partly concealed by the abundant willow bushes. My old wish surged up in me again, that of being able to imitate such objects worthily. I chanced to have a handsome pocket knife in my left hand, and at that moment it was as if a command rose up from the depths of my soul to hurl this knife into the river without delay. If I saw it fall in, my artistic wish would be fulfilled; if, however, the knife's plunge were hidden by the overhanging willow bushes, then I would be obliged to abandon this wish and endeavor. No sooner did this whim arise within me than I acted on it. Without a thought for the usefulness of this knife, which combined quite a few utensils, I vigorously hurled it toward the river with my left hand, just as I held it. But here again I had to experience the deceptive ambiguousness of oracles, which the ancients complained about so bitterly. The knife's entry into the river was hidden from me by the last willow boughs, but in reaction to its plunge the water leapt up like a great fountain and was perfectly visible to me. I did not give the phenomenon a favorable interpretation, and the doubts aroused in me were subsequently responsible for my being more negligent and less regular in my drawing exercises, so that I myself fulfilled the oracle. At least for that moment the external world was spoiled for me, and I yielded to my fantasies and feelings as, for the most part alone and only occasionally joining up briefly with someone else, I gradually proceeded past the well-situated castles and towns of Weilburg, Limburg, Diez, and Nassau.

After a few days of such pleasant journeying on foot I arrived at Ems, where I enjoyed the soothing baths several times, and then traveled down the river in a boat. The old Rhine spread out before me,

and I was charmed by the lovely situation of Oberlahnstein; but most majestic and splendid of all seemed to be Ehrenbreitstein Castle as it stood there in the full panoply of its power and might. Nestling at its base in most lovely contrast was the well-built small town called Thal, where I easily found my way to the residence of Privy Councilor von La Roche. Having been recommended by Merck, I got a very friendly reception from this noble family and was soon treated as one of its members. My belletristic and sentimental aspirations allied me to the mother, my cheerful worldliness to the father, and my youth to the daughters.⁸⁰

The house stood at the very end of the valley, slightly elevated above the river, and it had an open view downstream. The rooms were high and spacious, and their walls were hung with rows of paintings, as in a gallery. The windows faced in all directions, and each was the frame for a natural picture that emerged very vividly in the gleam of mild sunlight. It seemed to me that I had never seen such bright mornings and splendid evenings.

Not for long was I the only guest in the house. Another delegate to the congress that was to be held there partly in the name of art, partly of sentiment, was Leuchsenring,⁸¹ who came up from Düsseldorf. This man had an excellent knowledge of modern literature and had made many acquaintances on his various trips, especially during his stay in Switzerland, being favored because he was agreeable and ingratiating. He brought along several boxes containing his intimate correspondence with various friends, for there was then such a general lack of reticence among people that one could not speak or write to any individual without the feeling that various others were being addressed. A person would examine his own and others' hearts, and because the Taxis postal system⁸² was reliably swift, the seal secure, and the postage reasonable—and such communications were of no interest to the authorities—this moral and literary exchange was soon widespread.

Such correspondence, especially with notable persons, would be carefully collected and excerpts read aloud at gatherings of friends. And thus, since there was little interest in political discourse, one became quite well acquainted with the moral world in all its extent.

Leuchsenring's boxes contained many treasures of this kind. The letters of a certain Julie Bondeli⁸³ were highly esteemed: she was famed as a woman of sense and merit, and as a friend of Rousseau. Anyone with any connection whatever to this extraordinary man basked in the glory emanating from him, and a silent congregation had been established far and wide in his name.

I was happy to attend these readings because they transported me to an unfamiliar world and made me privy to many a recent event. To be sure, not all of it was of great substance, and Mr. von La Roche,

a cheerful man of the world and of affairs, whose Catholicism had not deterred him from writing lampoons on monkhood and priesthood, detected a confraternity here too, where many an insignificant individual could preen himself on his association with notable people and eventually perhaps advance himself at their expense. Usually this worthy man would withdraw from the group when the boxes were opened. If he occasionally did listen to some letters, we could expect a roguish observation from him. Among other things, he once said that this correspondence reinforced his long-held conviction that females could dispense with all sealing wax, for they could just pin their letters together and be assured that they would arrive at their destinations unopened. In the same fashion, he was accustomed to joke about everything outside the sphere of practical activity. With this he was conforming to the disposition of his lord and master Count Stadion,⁸⁴ the minister for Electoral Mainz, who was certainly not the most suitable person to counterbalance the boy's cool worldliness with respect for anything mystical.

However, an anecdote about the count's great practicality may be in order here. When he took a liking to the orphaned La Roche and chose him as his protégé, he immediately required the boy to render him secretarial services. He gave him letters to answer and dispatches to compose, and La Roche also had to make clean copies of these, frequently in code, and then seal and address them. This continued for several years. When the boy had matured into a young man and was really accomplishing what he previously had only imagined he was doing, the count led him to a large desk in which all these letters and packages lay preserved without being opened, as preliminary exercises.

Another exercise which the count required of his trainee will not find such general approbation. Namely, La Roche had to practice imitating his lord and master's handwriting very exactly, so that the latter would be spared the trouble of writing personally. Not only was this talent to be used in official matters, but the young man was also obliged to substitute for his teacher in affairs of the heart. The count was passionately involved with an intelligent lady of high rank. While he dallied in her company until the wee hours, his secretary would sit at home and concoct the most glowing love letters. The count would then select one of them and send the missive to his beloved that very night, so that she could not help being convinced of the unquenchable fire of her passionate admirer. Early experiences like this may well have given the youth less than the best impression of written love dialogues.

Although this man served two ecclesiastical electors, an implacable hatred of the clergy had firmly taken hold of him, probably as a result of his observation of the crude, tasteless, mind-destroying nonsense engaged in by monks in many parts of Germany, by which means they

hindered and ruined any sort of cultural development. His *Letters on Monasticism*⁸⁵ caused a great sensation, being received by all Protestants and many Catholics with great approbation.

Although Mr. von La Roche rejected anything suggestive of sentiment and held himself strictly aloof from even the appearance of it, he did not conceal his tender paternal affection for his elder daughter, who, to be sure, was nothing if not amiable. Not very tall of stature, she had a dainty figure, and an open, charming countenance, with the blackest eyes and the clearest, most glowing complexion imaginable. She loved her father in return, and was swayed by his views. As he was an active official, most of his time was taken up by professional duties, and, since the guests that came were really interested in his wife rather than him, their company could give him little pleasure. At table he was cheerful and entertaining, and he tried to keep at least his board free from the spice of sentiment.

Anyone familiar with Mrs. von La Roche's views and turn of mind—and owing to her long life and many writings she has become known and honored by each and every German—might perhaps suppose that these would surely cause tension at home. But by no means! She was the most amazing woman, and I would not know with whom to compare her. Slender and delicately built, moderately tall, she had succeeded even in her later years in retaining a certain elegance both of figure and demeanor that charmingly combined the conduct of a noblewoman with that of a dignified middle-class lady. She had not altered her style of dress for many years: her neat little flared cap was very becoming to her small face and fine features, and her brown or gray costume lent repose and dignity to her presence. She spoke well, and used sentiment to give significance to whatever she said. She behaved toward everyone in exactly the same way. But with all this I have still not expressed the most individual aspect of her character, which is difficult to describe. While she seemed to participate in everything, fundamentally she was affected by nothing. She was always gentle and tolerant, and took no offense. Whether it was her husband's jokes, or her friends' affection, or her children's charming ways—her reaction was always the same, and so she always remained herself, unmoved by good or evil in daily life, or by excellence or inferior quality in literature. To this disposition she owed the self-sufficiency which she retained into her old age, in spite of many sad, nay, wretched vicissitudes. But to be fair, I must also mention that her two sons, at that time children of dazzling beauty, sometimes coaxed an expression from her unlike the one she had for daily use.

Thus, for a while I continued to live in these new, wonderfully pleasant surroundings, until Merck arrived with his family. At this juncture new elective affinities immediately came into play, for whereas the two

women gravitated toward one another, Merck, being knowledgeable about the world and its affairs, being an educated and well-traveled man, had more in common with Mr. von La Roche. Their boy attached himself to the boys, while the daughters, the elder of whom I found especially attractive, were accorded to me. It is a very pleasant sensation to have a new passion stir in us before the old one has completely died away. Thus at sunset it is good to see the moon rise on the opposite side, and one can revel in the twofold gleam of both celestial lights.

Now there was an abundance of conversation in and outside of the house. We traversed the area, climbing Ehrenbreitstein on this side of the river and the Carthusian Mount on the other. The town, the bridge over the Moselle, the ferry that took us over the Rhine, everything afforded the most varied pleasure. The new palace was not yet built; we were conducted to its future site and allowed to see the proposed plans for it.

Yet within this rather cheerful situation a groundwork was being laid for incompatibility, which commonly manifests its disagreeable effects both in cultured and in uncultured company. Merck, both unmoved and made restless by that correspondence, had not listened to it very long before he gave voice to a number of waggish remarks about the matters discussed as well as the persons and their relationships, and he privately revealed some very strange things to me that were, he said, in reality concealed under all this. To be sure, no political secrets whatever were involved, and there was no particular association with anything; it was just that he made me aware of people who lack any special talent but have a certain knack for winning personal influence and try to make something of themselves by having an extensive acquaintanceship. From this time on, I had occasion to observe more of their kind. Since such persons generally are transient and arrive now here, now there, as travelers, they enjoy the advantage of being a novelty, which should not be begrudged them or spoiled for them. It is something traditional, as every traveler has learned to his delight, and every stay-at-home to his sorrow.

Be that as it may, suffice it to say that from then on we kept a certain worried, nay, jealous eye on people who moved back and forth unbidden, who dropped anchor in every town and tried to gain influence in at least a few families. Though not with approval, at least with good humor I depicted a soft and gentle member of this guild in *Father Sticky*, and another one, abler and cruder, in a Shrovetide play entitled *Satyros, or the Deified Forest-Demon*, which will be published at a future time.⁸⁶

Meanwhile the curious components of our little group were still getting along fairly well together. Partly we were kept under control by our own good manners, partly we were pacified by the lady of the house

and that special way of hers. Only slightly affected by what went on around her, she was always imbued with certain ideal concepts, and, by understanding how to express these amicably and benevolently, she could soften anything sharp that might arise in company, and smoothen anything rough.

Besides, Merck had given the signal for adjournment at just the right time, and so the company dispersed on the best terms. I sailed up the Rhine with him and his family on a yacht returning to Mainz, and although this was in itself a slow process, we made it more so by requesting the boatman not to hurry. Thus we had the leisure to enjoy the infinite variety of things, which seemed to grow more beautiful by the hour in this splendid weather and to keep changing in size as well as attractiveness. And as I pronounce the names Rhine Rock and St. Goar, Bacharach, Bingen, Eltville, and Biebrich, I only hope that each of my readers will be able to revive his memories of this region.

We had been busy sketching, and at least in this way impressed on ourselves more indelibly the myriad variations of those splendid shores. But what also grew more deeply felt was our relationship, and the result of this protracted association and our intimate exchange of ideas about a multitude of things was that Merck won great influence over me, and I became indispensable to him as a good complement to a comfortable existence. With eyes trained by nature to greater sharpness, I now turned again to the contemplation of art, for which the fine Frankfurt collections of painting and copperplates gave me the best of opportunities, and I became very indebted to the kindness of Messrs. Ettling and Ehrenreich, but especially the worthy Nothnagel.⁸⁷ Seeing nature in art became my passion, which at its extremest moments must have seemed close to madness to others, even fervent art lovers. And how could such a fondness be better upheld than through constant observation of the excellent works by Dutch painters? So that I might also get a practical acquaintance with these things, Nothnagel provided me with a small room where I found everything necessary for painting in oils. I did paint several still lifes from real objects, and one of them depicted a tortoiseshell knife handle, inlaid with silver, which so astonished my master, who had visited me only an hour before, that he swore one of his assistant artists had been with me in the meantime.

If I had patiently persisted in practicing on such objects, catching their lights and shadows and the peculiarities of their surfaces, I would have developed a certain technique and prepared my way toward more advanced work. But as it was, I was dogged by the error of all diletantes, who begin with what is hardest and even try to accomplish the impossible. Soon I involved myself in larger undertakings, in which I made no progress both because they were far beyond my technical

abilities and because I could not always purely and effectively maintain that devoted attentiveness and patient industry which enable even beginners to accomplish something.

At the same time I was also transported again into a higher sphere, for I had the opportunity to acquire several fine plaster casts of ancient heads. This was because the Italians who attended the fairs sometimes brought along good specimens of such things, which they were glad to sell, once a mould had been made from them. In this manner I established a little museum for myself, gradually collecting the heads of Laocoön, his sons, and Niobe's daughters, and I also bought up imitations in miniature of the most notable works of antiquity from the estate of an art lover. Thus I tried my best to renew the great impressions I had received in Mannheim.

While trying to train, nourish, and sustain any spark of talent, cultural interest, or other inclination within myself, I still spent a large part of the day, at my father's request, on legal work, and by coincidence I found an excellent opportunity to do so. After my grandfather's death, my uncle Textor had become a member of the council, and he turned over the smaller matters to me, which I could handle; the Schlosser brothers did likewise. I acquainted myself with the files, and my father also read them, being very pleased to see himself, at his son's behest, resume an activity of which he had long been deprived. After we had discussed these matters it was very easy for me to compose the necessary briefs. We had an excellent copyist available, who could also be relied on for all chancery formalities. And so this activity became a more pleasant diversion for me, since it brought me closer to my father, and he, being perfectly satisfied with my conduct in this matter, was glad to indulge me in whatever else I was doing, with the ardent expectation that I would soon reap fame as an author.

Because there is a general interconnection at every period of time, with prevailing opinions and views branching out in multiple ways, the same maxims that had been applied to religion and morality were gradually being followed in jurisprudence also. Humanism was spreading among the attorneys, or younger men, and then among the judges, or older men; and everyone strove to be very humane also in juridical matters. Prisons were improved, crimes excused, punishments eased, legitimations facilitated, divorce encouraged in misalliances—and one of our prominent attorneys won himself the greatest praise by successfully contending the right of a hangman's son⁸⁸ to enter the college of physicians. Guilds and corporations resisted in vain; one dam after the other was broken. Mutual tolerance between the religious parties was not only taught but practiced, and the civil constitution was threatened with a still stronger influence when a rational, intelligent, and vigorous attempt was made to persuade this kindly age to extend tol-

erance to the Jews. These new subjects for juridical treatment, which were neither in the law nor tradition, and could only make an appeal to fair judgment and genial interest, also required a more natural and livelier style. Here we, the youngest ones, saw a bright field open up for us, in which we gladly took our exercise, and I still remember quite well that the agent of an imperial councilor sent me a very nice letter praising me for a case like that. The French *plaidoyers*⁸⁹ served as our models and inspiration.

And consequently we were developing into better orators than jurists, as the solid George Schlosser once pointed out to me in disapproval. I had told him about a polemic that I had drawn up with great fervor to defend a client, and how when I read it aloud to the man he had expressed great satisfaction with it. To this, Schlosser retorted: "In this case you have proved yourself to be an author rather than a lawyer. One must never ask how such a composition pleases the client, but how it pleases the judge."

But there is no one, however serious and pressing the business to which he devotes his day, who cannot still find enough time in the evening to visit the theater. That is how it was with me, who felt the lack of an excellent stage and never ceased thinking about the German theater in the hope of possibly finding a way to influence it actively. Its condition in the second half of the past century is quite well known, and anyone desiring to get information about it can find ready assistance everywhere. Here, therefore, I intend only to insert a few general remarks.

The success of the stage was more dependent on the personality of the actors than on the quality of the plays. This was especially the case with plays that were half or wholly extemporized, in which the humor and talent of the comic actors counted for everything. The material for such plays must be taken from very ordinary life, and must conform to the customs of the people before whom one is playing. From this direct applicability arises the great applause they regularly receive. These plays had always been indigenous to southern Germany, where they have been preserved to the present day, and only occasionally is there some need to vary the character of the comic masks by a change of acting personnel. But the German theater, in keeping with the serious character of the nation, very soon turned in the direction of morality, and this was expedited even more by an external cause. Namely, strict Christians raised the question whether the theater was one of those sinful things to be avoided completely, or one of the neutral things which might be good for the good person and wicked only for the wicked individual. Stern zealots denied the latter proposition and were firmly agreed that no clergyman could ever go to the theater. There could be no emphatic advancement of the contrary argument stating that the

theater was not only harmless, but actually beneficial. Before it could be beneficial, it had to be moral, and in northern Germany this development progressed more quickly when, owing to a certain false standard of taste, the comic personage was banished. Although some intelligent individuals interceded in his behalf, he had to give way, since he had already abandoned the robust vulgarity of the German clown for the daintiness and delicacy of the French and Italian harlequins. Even Scapin and Crispin gradually disappeared. I saw the latter played for the last time by Koch⁹⁰ in his old age.

The novels of Richardson had already made the middle-class world aware of a more tender morality. The stern and inevitable consequences of a feminine misstep were unsparingly analyzed in *Clarissa*. Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson* treated the same theme. Then *The London Merchant* showed a seduced youth in the most appalling situation. The French dramas had the same objective but proceeded more temperately, and ended with matters settled pleasantly. Diderot's *Family Man*, and other works such as *The Honest Criminal*,⁹¹ *The Vinegar Seller*,⁹² *The Philosopher without Knowing It*,⁹³ and *Eugenia*⁹⁴ were in keeping with the respectable middle-class family feelings which were growing ever more prevalent. Among us the same path was trodden by *The Grateful Son*,⁹⁵ *The Deserter out of Paternal Love*,⁹⁶ and their ilk. *The Minister*, *Clementine*, and the other plays by Gebler,⁹⁷ and von Gemmingen's *German Family Man*⁹⁸ all genially illustrated the merits of the middle, indeed of the lower class, and delighted the public at large. Ekhof⁹⁹ had a noble personality that lent the acting profession a measure of dignity it had previously lacked, and he gave extraordinary stature to the main personages in these plays. As an upright man, he succeeded perfectly in depicting uprightness.

With the German theater now totally given over to sentimentality, Schröder¹⁰⁰ emerged as an author and actor, and Hamburg's connections with England prompted him to adapt some English comedies. In so doing, he could use their material only in the most general way, for the originals are mainly formless, and even if they start out with a good plan, they at last become hopelessly complex. Apparently the authors are solely concerned with presenting the strangest scenes they can, and anyone accustomed to a restrained work of art dislikes finding himself driven at last into boundlessness. Moreover these plays are permeated to such a pronounced, even intolerable, degree with wild and immoral, vulgar and disorderly doings that it would be very difficult to purge the plot and characters of all their impropriety. They are coarse, even dangerous fare, which a large and semi-depraved mass of people may have found enjoyable and digestible only at a certain time. Schröder did more to these plays than is generally known: he made fundamental changes, he adapted them to German ways of thinking, and made them

as mild as possible. However, they still retain a bitter kernel, because all too often the joke is based on persons being mistreated, whether or not they deserve it. Therefore in these presentations, which likewise spread throughout the theater, was found a hidden counterweight to that all too gentle morality, and the two types, acting in opposition to each other, fortunately prevented the monotony that would otherwise have resulted.

The German is good-humored and generous by nature and does not like to see anyone mistreated. But no one, however right-thinking, is proof against having something foisted on him against his inclination; and comedy, if it is to please, must in general presuppose or excite some malice in the spectator. Thus it was only natural that we should drift into a kind of behavior previously considered unnatural—that of downgrading the upper classes and more or less laying hands on them. Satire in prose and verse had heretofore always carefully avoided touching the court and the nobles. Rabener refrained from all mockery in this direction and kept to a lower sphere. While Zachariä often dealt with country gentry and gave a comical picture of their favorite pursuits and peculiarities, he did it without disrespect. Thümmel's *Wilhelmina*¹⁰¹ was a clever little composition, bold but pleasant, and it won great applause, perhaps partly because the author, although a nobleman and courtier, treated his own class with something less than consideration. However, it was Lessing who took the most decisive step with *Emilia Galotti*, in which there is a bitterly penetrating portrayal of passion and intrigue in the upper regions. All of these things strongly appealed to the agitated spirit of those times, and persons of less wit and talent supposed they had leave to do the same and more besides, as when Grossmann¹⁰² served up six unappetizing *Dishes* to a malicious public, with all the tidbits from his plebeian kitchen. Aulic Councillor Reinhard, an honest man, played the majordomo at this unsatisfactory table, to the consolation and edification of all the guests. From this time onwards theatrical villains were always chosen from the upper classes, and indeed the personage had to be a chamberlain or at least a privy secretary to be worthy of such a distinction. But the most godless specimens of all were sought among the highest ranks and officials listed in the court and civil directory, and in this distinguished company, then, the justiciaries, as villains of the lowest tribunal, also found a place.

But since I fear I have already gone beyond the epoch under discussion here, I shall return to my own self and say something about the impulse I felt to spend my free hours working on already conceived theatrical plans.

My continuing interest in Shakespeare's works had so expanded my mind that the narrow stage and the short time allotted to a performance seemed to me by no means adequate for the presentation of anything

significant. The *Life* of honest Götz von Berlichingen, written by himself,¹⁰³ compelled me to adopt the historical mode, and my powers of imagination stretched to the point where my dramatic form also exceeded all theatrical bounds and tried to approximate ever more closely the actual events. As I progressed, I discussed it all in detail with my sister, who was interested heart and soul in such matters. But I renewed our conversations so often without settling down to any work that she finally lost patience and implored me, in a well-meaning way, not just to spout words into the air but to fix on paper what I so clearly visualized. Moved by her urging, one morning I began to write, without having worked out a sketch or plan. I wrote the first scenes and read them aloud to Cornelia that evening. She highly approved of them, but had reservations, because she doubted that I would continue in this way; indeed she had no confidence at all in my perseverance. This only acted as an added stimulus, so that I kept going the next day, and the third one. The daily reports raised her hopes, and step by step it all grew more alive for me too, for I had, after all, thoroughly assimilated the material. And so I kept on working without interruption, hewing to a straight line without looking forward or backward, right or left, and at the end of six weeks I had the pleasure of seeing the manuscript bound. I let Merck see it, and he discussed it intelligently and in a kindly manner. I sent it to Herder, but his comments were harsh and unfriendly, and he did not fail to call me some mocking names in a few lampoons written for the occasion. I did not let this deter me, but instead took a good look at my work; the die was cast now, and it was only a question of how one might best arrange the pieces on the board. I realized that no one's advice would help me with this either, and when, after some time, I was able to look at my work objectively, I had to admit that in attempting to dispense with the unities of time and place I had also detracted from the higher unity which is then all the more necessary. Without plan or outline I had simply yielded to my imagination and an inner compulsion, but initially had stayed quite true to my purpose, and the first acts could suitably pass for what they were meant to be. In the following ones, however, and especially toward the end, I was unconsciously driven by a strange passion. In trying to portray Adelaide sympathetically, I had fallen in love with her myself, and my pen automatically devoted itself to her alone. My interest in her fate prevailed, for Götz in any case is put out of action toward the end, returning only for his ill-starred participation in the Peasants' War. Nothing could have been more natural than for a charming woman to outshine him with the author, who had shaken off artistic fetters and wanted to try his hand in a new field. I was quick to recognize this shortcoming, or rather this objectionable excess, since it was the nature of my poetry to incline toward unity. I now concentrated on the drama

itself instead of Götz's autobiography and German antiquities. I tried to give it more and more historical, national substance, and to expunge everything fantastic or merely emotional. Of course, in doing so I sacrificed a great deal, because my human inclinations had to give way to artistic convictions. Thus, for example, I had taken great pleasure in having Adelaide appear in an uncanny nocturnal Gypsy scene where her lovely presence worked wonders. A closer inspection banished her from it, just as the fully developed love action between Franz and his gracious lady in the fourth and fifth acts was condensed and only the high points allowed to manifest themselves.

I did not change anything in the first manuscript and indeed still possess it in its original form; instead I undertook to rewrite the whole work, and applied myself to this so steadily that within a few weeks I had a completely revised play in front of me. I had gone to work on this with all the greater speed since I had no intention of publishing the second version, but viewed it as merely another preliminary exercise, which at some future time I would use as the basis for a new treatment, one to be undertaken with greater industry and thought.

When, thereupon, I began putting forth various ideas to Merck about how I intended to do this, he scoffed at me and asked what sense there was in this everlasting working and reworking. He said it only made a thing different, seldom better; one should see how a given work was received, and then keep undertaking new ones.—“Promptly to the fence is how to dry diapers!” was the proverb he shouted at me, adding that delay and hesitation only make a person feel insecure. I countered by saying how disagreeable it would be to offer a publisher a work on which so much love had been expended, perhaps only to receive a negative answer. How was an unknown young author going to be judged, especially one who was audacious? As my dread of the press started to recede, I would even have been glad to see my *Accomplices* in print, for I thought it was quite good; but I did not find a willing publisher.

Now my friend's technical and mercantile enthusiasms were suddenly stirred. Thanks to the *Frankfurt Gazette* he had already established liaison with scholars and publishers. Therefore he suggested publishing this curious and very striking work at our own expense, so as to make a nice profit on it. He was like many other people who were wont to calculate publishers' earnings: these were admittedly large in regard to some works, but only if the great losses sustained with other works and due to sundry trade conditions were left out of consideration. Suffice it to say, we agreed that I was to provide the paper and he would see to the printing; and so the work began with a will, and I was not a little pleased to see my wild sketch of a drama gradually appear in clean advance proofs. It really looked much neater than I myself had ex-

pected. We completed the project, and it was sent off in many packages. Before long there was a great commotion everywhere; the work created a universal sensation. However, because our limited means had not permitted us to distribute the copies quickly enough to all towns, a pirated edition suddenly appeared. Moreover we could not expect quick payment, least of all in cash, for what we had dispatched. And so, as a son living at home and thus without large sums of ready money, I was, at a time when I was receiving attention and even great approval from all sides, in extreme embarrassment about how I would pay for the paper on which I had acquainted the world with my talent. Merck, on the other hand, was better able to take care of himself and felt very confident that everything would soon be settled; but I saw no sign of this.

I had already come to know the public and the reviewers in connection with the little pamphlets I published anonymously at my own expense, and I was pretty well prepared for their praise and criticism. For several years I had also kept track and observed how the authors I considered especially worthy of note were treated.

Here, even in my uncertainty, I still could plainly detect how carelessly a great many unfounded, one-sided, and arbitrary things were said. Now the same was happening to me, and if I had not already been somewhat prepared for it, how confused I would have been by the contradictory statements of cultivated men! Thus, for example, there was an extensive, well-meant review in *The German Mercury* written by some limited intellect or other. I could not agree with his criticisms, much less his suggestions for improvement. So it did my heart good when, directly afterwards, I found a cheerful statement by Wieland, who generally disagreed with the reviewer and took my part against him. Nevertheless, the former had also been printed, and so I saw an example of dull mentality even among educated and cultivated men. What could then be expected of the public at large!

My pleasure in enlightening myself by discussing such things with Merck was cut short when the discerning Landgravine of Hesse-Darmstadt included him in her retinue on a trip to Petersburg. He wrote me long letters that broadened my perspective of the world, and it was all the easier to assimilate these descriptions since they were drawn by the familiar hand of a friend. But nevertheless I continued for quite a while to feel very lonely, and missed his interest and instruction, which I needed so much at this important time.

Whoever resolves to become a soldier and go to war must also set his mind courageously to endure danger and hardships, and to suffer wounds and pain, nay, even death; but in doing so he will by no means imagine the specific conditions under which these evils, only expected in general, can most unpleasantly surprise us. And thus it is with every-

one who ventures out into the world, especially authors, and so it was with me. Since the majority of the public reacts more to subject matter than its treatment, young men's interest in my plays was mostly in the contents. They thought they saw a banner there under whose advance all the wild and boorish elements in youth could surely flourish, and it was actually the best minds who were enraptured, those in which something similar was currently lurking. I have kept a letter of Bürger's, that excellent and in many respects unique man, addressed to I know not whom, which can serve as important documentation of the effects and excitement caused at that time by my work. On the negative side, sedate men criticized me for having painted the rule of violence in all too favorable colors, indeed they accused me of wanting to reintroduce those turbulent times. Still others took me for a true scholar and urged me to publish honest Götz's narrative anew, with notes, but I did not feel at all qualified to do that, although I did not object when someone chose to put my name on the title page of the new reprint. Because I had been able to pluck the blossoms from a great life, I was taken for a meticulous horticulturalist. However, others had doubts about my reputed erudition and thorough expertise. A distinguished state official quite unexpectedly paid a call on me. I considered myself highly honored, especially since he began the conversation with praise of my *Götz von Berlichingen* and my knowledge of German history. But I was taken aback when I perceived that he really only had come to inform me that Götz von Berlichingen had not been Franz von Sickingen's brother-in-law and that I had gravely transgressed against history with this imaginary marriage. I tried to excuse myself by saying that this was what Götz himself had called him, but I received the reply that this was a term expressive of a close friendly relationship, just as in modern times postillions are also called "brother-in-law," although no family ties exist between them and us. I thanked him as well as I could for this correction, and was only sorry that the damage could no longer be repaired. This was regretted on his part as well, and he most amicably admonished me to make some further study of German history and the German constitution. To this end he offered me his library, of which I subsequently made good use.

However, the most amusing thing of the kind that I encountered was the visit of a publisher who with a cheerful lack of guile requested a dozen such plays for himself and promised a good honorarium for them. It can be imagined how much fun we made of this, and yet he was basically not so far wrong, because in private I was already busy moving backward and forward from this turning point in German history and working on the foremost events in the same fashion. Like so many others, this laudable intention came to naught because time swept by so quickly.

To be sure, that drama had not been its author's sole occupation, for while it was being conceived, written, rewritten, printed, and distributed many other images and ideas were stirring in his mind. Those meant for dramatic treatment had the advantage of being thought through most often and nearly completed, but simultaneously a transition developed to a different kind of presentation, which is not ordinarily considered dramatic and yet has a great relationship to drama. This transition was brought about mainly by the author's peculiar habit of recasting even soliloquy as dialogue.

Being accustomed to spend his time preferably in company, he transformed even solitary thinking into social conversation, and in the following way: namely, when he found himself alone, he would summon up in spirit some person of his acquaintance. He would ask this person to be seated, pace up and down by him, stand in front of him, and discuss whatever subject he had in mind. The person would occasionally answer him and indicate, with the customary gestures, his agreement or disagreement; and everyone has a particular way of doing this. Then the speaker would continue, and expand on whatever seemed to please his guest; or he would qualify what the latter disapproved of, and define it more clearly, and even finally be willing to abandon his thesis. The most curious aspect of this was that he never chose persons of his closer acquaintanceship, but those he saw only rarely, nay, often some who lived in far-off places and with whom he had merely a passing relationship. But usually they were persons more receptive than communicative in nature, open-minded and prepared to be calmly interested in matters within their ken, although sometimes he would also summon contentious spirits to these dialectical exercises. Persons of both sexes, and of every age and condition, submitted to this and proved agreeable and charming, because the conversation was only about subjects they liked and understood. Yet many of them would have been greatly amazed, had they been able to find out how often they were summoned to these imaginary conversations, since they would hardly have come to a real one.

It is quite clear that such thought-conversations are closely related to correspondence, except that the latter responds to an established familiarity, while the former creates a new, ever-changing familiarity for itself, with no reply. Thus, when the author had to depict that ennui with life felt by some people who are not beset by any real trouble, it immediately occurred to him to portray his sentiments in letters. For every distemper is generated and nurtured by solitude. Whoever yields to it, flees all counteraction, and what counteracts it more than any sort of cheerful company? Other people's enjoyment of life is a painful reproach to him, and so the very thing that ought to draw him out actually turns him back upon his innermost self. If he cares to discuss

this at all, it will be through letters, for no one, after all, can immediately oppose a written effusion, be it joyous or ill-humored. An answer composed of counterarguments, however, gives the recluse an opportunity to become more entrenched in his melancholy thoughts and reason to become still more obdurate. The letters of Werther written in this spirit probably owe their manifold appeal to the fact that their various contents were first rehearsed in imaginary dialogues with several individuals, whereas in the composition itself they seem to be directed to only *one* friend and sympathizer. It is perhaps not altogether advisable to say more about the writing of this much-discussed little work; something about its contents, however, can be added.

The aforementioned disgust with life has both its physical and moral causes. Let investigation of the former be left to physicians, of the latter, to moral philosophers; and we shall pay heed only to the main point in this so frequently treated material, the point where that phenomenon stands out most clearly. All our pleasure in life depends on the regular recurrence of external things. The alternation of day and night, of seasons, of blossoms and fruits, and of everything else each epoch brings—these are the real foundation of life on earth. The more receptive we are to such pleasures, the happier we feel. If, however, these various phenomena surge and fall before us and we take no interest in them, if we are insensitive to these lovely offerings, then the greatest of evils sets in, the gravest illness, which is to view life as a repugnant burden. It is told of an Englishman that he hanged himself so as not to be forced to dress and undress every day. I knew an honest gardener, the overseer of a large park, who once cried out in annoyance: “Must I then constantly watch these rainclouds move from west to east?” It is said of one of our most excellent men¹⁰⁴ that he was vexed with seeing the spring grow verdant again and wished it might look red for a change. These are truly symptoms of life-weariness, which not infrequently results in suicide and was more prevalent among philosophical, introverted people than one might believe.

But there is no more effective cause of this weariness than the recurrence of love. It is correctly said that the first love is the only one, for the supreme sense of love gets lost in the second and because of the second. The concept of eternity and affinity that really exalts and sustains love is destroyed, so that it seems as transitory as everything else that recurs. The separation of the physical from the moral part of it, which in the complex cultivated world divides the feelings of love from those of desire, also produces an exaggeration here that cannot bring good results.

Furthermore a young man will soon perceive, perhaps not in himself but at least in others, that moral epochs alternate just like seasons. The grace extended by the great, the favor shown by the powerful, the

advancement offered by persons in active life, the affection of the crowd, and the love of individuals, all of these fluctuate, and we cannot hold fast to them any more than to the sun, moon, and stars. And yet these things are not mere natural phenomena. It is by our own fault or that of others, or through chance or destiny, that they escape us; but they do alternate, and we are never in secure possession of them.

However, what gives a sensitive youth the greatest concern is the inevitable recurrence of our errors. How late we come to the realization that while we are developing our virtues we are simultaneously cultivating our faults! The former rest upon the latter as though on roots, which branch out in secret as vigorously and diversely as our virtues do in the light of day. Because we usually exercise our virtues with conscious will, whereas our faults take us unawares, the former seldom give us any joy, and the latter always distress and torment us. This is the hardest part about acquiring knowledge of oneself, and what makes it almost impossible. Add the seething blood of youth and an imagination easily paralyzed by individual things; add also the shifting currents of the time, and it will not be found unnatural if someone strives impatiently to be freed of such a dilemma.

Yet these gloomy thoughts, which, if one yields to them, can lead to infinity, could not have found such marked development in the minds of German youth if the latter had not been stimulated and assisted in this sad business by external suggestion. English literature was responsible, especially the poetry, whose great merits are coupled with a grave melancholy that infects everyone who studies it. The talented Briton sees himself surrounded from youth onwards by a world full of significance, which stimulates all his energies. Sooner or later he perceives that he has to muster all his wits to come to terms with it. How many of their poets have not led lusty and dissolute lives in their youth and soon found themselves justified in accusing earthly things of vanity! How many of them have tried their mettle in world affairs, where they have played either major or minor roles in parliament, at court, in the ministry, in ambassadorial posts, taking an active part at times of internal unrest and changes of regime and government, only to undergo more sad experiences than happy ones, if not personally, at any rate with respect to their friends and patrons! How many of them have not been banished, exiled, imprisoned, and deprived of their estates!

But even just to be a spectator at such great events demands gravity of a person, and to what can gravity lead except meditation on the transitoriness and vanity of all earthly things? Since Germans are also grave, English poetry suited them very well and seemed imposing because it issued from superior circumstances. Great, sound, worldly-wise understanding was to be found in it everywhere, a profound, tender heart, the best of intentions, and passionate endeavor, the most splendid

qualities for which an intelligent, cultured person can be praised—but all of these together still do not make a poet. True poetry makes itself known by the fact that it, as a secular gospel, can free us from our oppressive earthly burdens with its inner serenity and external delights. Like an air balloon it lifts us, with our ballast attached, into higher regions and lets the tangled maze of earth lie unrolled before us in bird's eye perspective. The sprightliest and the gravest works have an identical purpose, which is to moderate pleasure and pain by means of a felicitous, ingenious presentation. Now let the majority of English, mostly moral-didactic poems be viewed in this light, and as a rule they will show nothing more than a gloomy weariness with life. Not only Young's *Night Thoughts*, which prominently develop this theme, but also the rest of the contemplative poems abruptly wander off into this dreary sphere where the mind is given a task it cannot adequately perform, since even religion, or as much of it as can be brought to bear on the problem, is of no avail. Whole volumes could be printed as a commentary to that dreadful text.

Then old Age and Experience, hand in hand,
Lead him to death, and make him understand,
After a search so painful and so long,
That all his life he has been in the wrong.¹⁰⁵

What additionally makes complete misanthropes of English poets and puts an unpleasant feeling of general anger into their writings is the fact that all of them, given the multiple divisions of their political organization, have to devote the best part, if not all, of their lives, to one party or the other. Such an author cannot laud and magnify the people he is devoted to, nor the cause to which he adheres, because this would only arouse envy and dislike. Therefore he exercises his talent by speaking as evilly and derogatorily of his opponents as possible, and sharpens, nay, adds poison to the weapons of satire as much as he can. When both sides do this, the world between them is destroyed and simply canceled out, so that nothing can be found in this great, intelligently active national community but, to put it mildly, folly and madness. Even their amorous poems deal with sad subjects. Here dies a forsaken girl, there drowns a faithful lover, or else he is eaten by a shark as he rashly swims to reach the side of his beloved. And when a poet like Gray encamps in a village churchyard and strikes up those familiar melodies again, he can be sure that a number of the friends of melancholy will gather around him. Milton's "Allegro" must first chase away ill humor with some vehement verses before he can achieve a very moderate degree of pleasure, and even the cheerful Goldsmith succumbs to elegiac feelings in his *Deserted Village*, where he describes

in lovely but sad terms the lost paradise sought throughout the world by his "Traveler."

I have no doubt that in contrast to this I could be shown sprightly works and cheerful poems; but certainly the majority and the best of these go back to an older period, while the modern ones that might be included tend toward satire, are bitter, and are especially scornful of women.

Suffice it to say that those serious poems mentioned above, the ones that were debilitating to human nature, were our favorite selections and we preferred them to all others. Depending on our dispositions, some of us turned to the lighter, elegiac kind of grief, others to the heavy burden of total despair. Oddly enough, it was our father and mentor Shakespeare, otherwise the dispenser of such pure cheerfulness, who himself fueled this distemper. Hamlet and his soliloquies were spectres that continued to haunt all youthful minds. Everyone knew the main passages by heart and gladly recited them, and everyone thought he had a right to be as melancholy as the prince of Denmark, though he had seen no ghost and had no royal father to avenge.

In order, as it were, to supply this pervading gloom with a thoroughly suitable locale, Ossian lured us off to Ultima Thule, where we roamed about on the infinite gray heath amidst protruding mossy gravestones, looking around us at the grass blown by a chill wind, and above us at the heavily clouded sky. Only by moonlight did this Caledonian night really become day: perished heroes and vanished maidens hovered about us, and we actually began to believe that we had seen the ghost of Loda in its fearsome form.

It was in this element and environment and while given to this sort of favorite pursuit and study that we, who were tormented by unfulfilled desires and bereft of any external stimulus to significant actions, who had no other prospects than that of being stuck in a tedious, spiritless civil routine, embraced the thought, in something like an exhilaration of depression, that we could abandon life at will, if it no longer pleased us; and thus we had at least a scanty defense against the injustice and boredom of those days. These sentiments were universal enough to give *Werther* its great effectiveness, for the book went to the heart of the matter and gave an open, comprehensible portrayal of the innermost workings of a morbid youthful folly. How very familiar the English were with this misery is proved by the following notable lines written before the appearance of *Werther*:

To griefs congenial prone,
More wounds than nature gave he knew,
While misery's form his fancy drew
In dark ideal hues and horrors not its own.¹⁰⁶

Suicide is a phenomenon of human nature that demands everyone's attention and needs reassessment in every epoch, however much it may already have been discussed and treated. Montesquieu grants his heroes and great men the right to take their lives at will, saying that everyone must be at liberty to conclude the fifth act of his tragedy as he pleases. However, my subject here is not those who have led a significant, active life, who have dedicated their days to some great realm or to the cause of freedom. When the idea that inspired such persons has vanished from the earth, we do not begrudge them the wish to pursue it in the other world. Here we are concerned with those who actually become disgusted with life because they have placed exaggerated demands on themselves, whereas, in the most peaceful situation imaginable, there is a dearth of deeds. Since I was in that state myself and know best what pain I suffered, what exertions it cost me to escape that pain, I shall not conceal that I deliberately meditated on the various kinds of death that can be chosen.

It is such an unnatural thing for a person to sever connections with himself, and not only injure but annihilate himself, that he will often seize on a mechanical means of putting his resolve into effect. When Ajax falls on his sword, it is the weight of his body that does him this last service. When a warrior charges his shield bearer not to let him fall into enemy hands, this is again making sure of an external force, although a moral rather than a physical one. Women seek to cool their despair in water, and the least strenuous way of assuring the swiftness of the deed is the gun, which is a very mechanical means. One only reluctantly mentions hanging, because it is an ignoble death. It is most apt to be encountered in England, where, from childhood on, one sees many a person hanged, and the punishment is not exactly a dishonor. Poison and the cutting of veins are for those who plan a slow exit from life, and the very fastidious, quick, and painless death from an adder's bite was fitting for a queen who had spent her life in splendor and pleasure. But all of these are external devices; they are enemies with which a person concludes a pact against himself.

In my consideration of all these methods and my further examination of history, I found no one who had performed the deed with as much grandeur and freedom of spirit as Emperor Otho.¹⁰⁷ He saw himself at a disadvantage, but by no means in extremity, as a general; yet he decided, in the best interests of the empire that in a certain sense was already his, and to spare many thousands of lives, to depart this world. He cheerfully enjoyed a supper with his friends, and the next morning they found he had plunged a sharp dagger into his heart with his own hand. This was the only deed I considered worthy of imitation, and I convinced myself that if anyone could not act like Otho in this regard he should not be permitted to take voluntary leave of the world. This

conviction not only saved me from the intention of suicide but from the melancholy thought of it which had taken hold of idle youth in these splendidly peaceful times. Among other items in my considerable collection of weapons was a valuable, well-honed dagger. I always laid this next to my bed, and before extinguishing the light I would try to bring myself to sink its sharp tip a few inches deep into my chest. Since I never could do it, I finally laughed at myself, cast away all hypochondriacal whimsies, and resolved to live. But to do this cheerfully, I had to complete a literary assignment that would express everything I had felt, thought, and fancied about this important point. The elements of it had been wandering around within me for a few years, and now I collected them, concentrating my mind on those instances which had most oppressed and worried me. But nothing would take shape for me: I lacked an event, a plot, in which to incorporate these things.

All at once I heard the news of Jerusalem's death, and on the very heels of the general rumor there followed the most exact and detailed description of the occurrence.¹⁰⁸ At this moment I found the plan for *Werther*.¹⁰⁹ From all sides the whole thing crystallized into a solid mass, just as water in a bucket, when at the freezing point, can be immediately changed to firm ice by the slightest shock. It was particularly opportune for me to have this singular prize within my grasp, to concentrate on a work of such significant and varied content and finish all its parts, since I had again gotten into an embarrassing situation, with even fewer good prospects than the others, and presaging nothing but depression, if not vexation.

It is always disastrous to enter into new circumstances that are foreign to one's tradition. We are often lured into a false interest, and although the incompleteness of such situations is distressing, we see no means either of making them whole or renouncing them.

Mrs. von La Roche had sent her elder daughter off to married life in Frankfurt and often came to visit her, but was unable to adjust to a situation she herself had chosen. Instead of feeling comfortable in it or bringing about some change, she indulged in so many lamentations that one would really have thought her daughter was unhappy. Yet it was unclear what the source of this unhappiness was, since the young woman lacked for nothing and her husband refused her nothing. Meanwhile I was being well received in the house and associated with the whole circle, which consisted of persons who had either promoted the marriage or were wishing it the best success. I won the confidence, indeed the friendship of Dumeix,¹¹⁰ the deacon of St. Leonhard. He was the first Catholic clergyman with whom I came into fairly close contact, and he was a very perspicacious man, who beautifully and adequately explained to me the beliefs and usages, and the external and internal condition of the oldest church. I still clearly remember the personal ap-

pearance of a comely, though no longer young, woman by the name of Servièrre.¹¹¹ I likewise met the Allesina-Schweitzer family¹¹² and others, and made friendly, long-lasting associations with their sons. Suddenly I saw myself at home in a foreign circle and was prompted, indeed urged, to participate in their activities, pleasures, even their religious exercises. My earlier relationship to the young wife, actually a fraternal one, was continued after her marriage. We were compatible because of our age, and I was the only one in the whole circle from whom she heard an echo of those intellectual tones to which she had been accustomed from childhood onwards. We went on living side by side in childlike trust and, while there was no admixture of passion in our association, it was quite tormenting, because she also was uncomfortable in her new situation. Though blessed with material goods, she had been transported from cheerful Thal-Ehrenbreitstein and her happy youth into a gloomily situated commercial house, where she was already expected to act as mother to several stepchildren. I was hemmed in by all these new family circumstances without having any real share in them or any contribution to make. If there was mutual peace, that seemed to be taken for granted; but in instances of annoyance most of the participants turned to me, and my lively sympathy usually made things worse rather than better. Before long, the situation grew quite intolerable for me. All the ennui that such false relationships generally produce seemed to weigh on me doubly and triply, and a mighty new resolve was required if I was to be liberated from this.

Jerusalem's death, which was caused by his unfortunate love for a friend's wife, shook me out of my dream.¹¹³ I did not take a merely objective view of his experiences and mine; on the contrary, their similarity with what was happening to me at this moment put me into a state of emotional excitement. Thus the production just undertaken by me was inevitably filled with an incandescence permitting no distinction between poetry and reality. Outwardly I totally isolated myself, refusing my friends' visits, and inwardly, too, I set aside everything that did not directly pertain to my work. On the other hand, I assembled everything that had any reference to my plan and reviewed my latest experiences in life, which had not yet been put to any literary use. Under such circumstances, and after such long and often secret preparations, I wrote *Werther* in four weeks, without having written down in advance any scheme for the whole work, or a treatment of any part of it.

The now finished manuscript lay before me in a first draft, with few corrections and emendations. It was bound at once, for binding is to a piece of writing approximately what a frame is to a picture: one can more easily see then if it really amounts to anything. Since I had written this little work rather unconsciously, like a somnambulist, I was amazed myself when I looked through it to make changes and improvements.

But in the expectation that many additional improvements would occur to me after a while, when I looked at it from a certain distance, I let my younger friends read it. The effect on them was all the greater because, contrary to habit, I had not talked to anyone about it beforehand or revealed my intention. Of course, here again it was the subject matter that actually produced the effect, and therefore they were in a mood precisely opposite to mine. For through this composition, more than any other, I had saved myself from a stormy element on which I had been tossed back and forth most violently, by my own and others' doing, by chance and chosen mode of life, by resolve and rashness, by obstinacy and pliancy. I felt as glad and free again as after a general confession, and entitled to a new life. The old home remedy had served me supremely well this time. But whereas I felt relieved and serene for having transformed reality into poetry, my friends were misled into thinking that poetry must be transformed into reality, that they must reenact the novel, and possibly shoot themselves. And what began here among a few, afterwards took place in the public at large, and the little book that had been of such great profit to me was decried as hurtful in the extreme.¹¹⁴

However, all the evils and misfortunes it is said to have caused were accidentally almost prevented when, soon after its birth, it was in danger of being annihilated, in the following fashion: Merck had recently returned from Petersburg. Since he was always busy, I had hardly spoken to him and had been able to tell him only in very general terms about this *Werther* that was so close to my heart. Once he paid me a visit, and since he did not seem to have much to say, I asked him to listen to me. He sat down on the settee, and I began to read the story aloud, letter by letter. After continuing in this way for a while without eliciting any sign of approval from him, I worked up still more pathos; but imagine how I felt, when, during a pause, he crushed me most dreadfully by saying, "Well, it is very nice!" and departed without adding anything to that. I was quite beside myself, for at the first stage I enjoyed my writings without judging them, and now I was thoroughly convinced that I had chosen the wrong subject, tone, and style (all of which were in fact questionable) and had completed something quite unacceptable. Had there been an available open fire, I would have immediately thrown my work into it; but I controlled myself and spent some painful days until Merck finally confided to me that just then he had been in the most dreadful situation a person can get into. Consequently he had not seen or heard anything and had no notion about the contents of my manuscript. Meanwhile, the affair had been set right as far as possible, and Merck at his energetic times was a man who could adapt himself to any calamity. His sense of humor returned, except that it had become

more bitter than before. With blunt words he chided me for wanting to revise *Werther* and insisted on seeing it printed as it was. A clean copy was made, and it did not stay in my hands for long. By coincidence, on the same day that my sister married George Schlosser and the house was aglow with the excitement of a joyous festivity, a letter arrived from Weygand in Leipzig, requesting a manuscript of me. I took this concurrence of events for a good omen, sent *Werther* off to him, and was quite happy to see that the honorarium I received was not completely consumed by the debts I had been forced to incur on account of *Götz von Berlichingen*.

The impression made by my little book was great, nay, immense, and principally because it appeared at just the right time. For as only a modicum of priming powder is needed to detonate a powerful mine, so the explosion that now occurred among the public was a mighty one because the young people were themselves already on unsure ground. The perturbation was very great because every individual burst out with his exaggerated demands, unsatisfied passions, and imaginary sorrows. The public cannot be expected to receive an intellectual work intellectually. Nothing was really considered but the contents, the subject matter, as I had already seen with my friends; and in addition the old prejudice arose again, based on the dignity of a printed book, namely that it has to have a didactic purpose. However, the true work of art has none. It neither approves nor censures, but instead develops sentiments and actions in sequence, and thereby illuminates and instructs.

I took slight notice of the reviews. For me the matter was completely settled, and now it was up to those good people to see how they could come to terms with it. But my friends did not fail to collect these items, which furnished them much amusement since they were more privy to my views. *The Joys of Young Werther*, with which Nicolai distinguished himself, gave us occasion for all sorts of jokes. This otherwise worthy, meritorious, and knowledgeable man had already begun to suppress and do away with everything that did not suit his manner of thinking, which he, being very narrow-minded, considered the only genuine one. He immediately felt the need to joust with me too, and his brochure soon fell into our hands. I was greatly pleased with Chodowiecki's vignette,¹¹⁵ since in any case I had the greatest respect for this artist. But the botched-up work itself was cut from coarse homespun, which common sense enjoys preparing very crudely in the family circle. Insensitive to the fact that intervention would be of no avail here, since the blossom of Werther's youth appears bitten by the deadly worm from the very beginning, the author allows my treatment to stand until page 214, where, when the reckless fellow is preparing his fatal step, the prudent psychic healer is able to foist a pistol loaded with chicken's blood on

his patient, so that a messy spectacle ensues, but fortunately no disaster. Lotte becomes Werther's wife, and the whole affair ends to everyone's satisfaction.

That is as much as I can remember, for I never laid eyes on it again. I cut out the vignette and kept it with my favorite engravings. Then I quietly took a moderate revenge by composing a little satirical poem, "Nicolai on Werther's Grave," which, however, is no longer extant.¹¹⁶ The occasion also reawakened my desire for giving dramatic form to everything, and I wrote a prose dialogue between Lotte and Werther which turned out rather facetiously: Werther complains bitterly because his chicken-blood rescue has had such bad results. Granted, he has remained alive, but he has shot out his eyes. Now he is in despair about being her husband and not seeing her, since the total view of her person would be much preferable to ascertaining the sweet details through the sense of touch. Lotte, as we know her, is also not the girl to be particularly satisfied with a blind husband, and so there is occasion to rebuke Nicolai severely for his presumption in meddling unbidden in other people's affairs. The whole piece was written with good humor, and in a freely prescient way it portrayed Nicolai's later unfortunate, presumptuous efforts to grapple with matters that were beyond him, to the point where he eventually caused himself and others much annoyance, and eventually, in spite of his undoubted merits, entirely lost his literary esteem. The original manuscript of this jest was never copied, and it disappeared years ago.¹¹⁷ I was especially fond of this little work. The pure glow of affection between the young persons was intensified rather than weakened by the tragicomic situation in which they found themselves. The greatest delicacy reigned throughout, and even the antagonist was treated humorously instead of bitterly. But I also let my little novel itself speak a part, in words not quite so courteous, and it imitated an old rhyme in expressing itself as follows:

Let that man in his conceit
 Say that I'm a danger—
 To blame one's awkward swimming feat
 On *water* would not be much stranger!
 Berlin may ban, I'll not retreat
 From would-be taste dictators!
 Their understanding I defeat,
 And so they need translators.

Since I was prepared for whatever protests would be made against *Werther*, all these objections did not upset me in the least. But I had hardly thought I would be so intolerably tormented by sympathetic well-wishers. Instead of saying anything complimentary to me about my little book as it stood, every single one of them wanted to know,

for once and all, how much of the affair was actually true. Then I would grow very annoyed and usually return a very rude reply. For I had meditated a long time about this little work in order to give poetic unity to its various elements, and to answer their question I would have been obliged to pick it to pieces again and destroy its form, with the result that its true constituent parts would have been, if not annihilated, at any rate scattered and dispersed. However, on second thought I could not blame the public for its demand. Jerusalem's fate had caused a great sensation. A cultivated, amiable, reputable young man, the son of one of the most prominent theologians and authors, healthy and wealthy, had suddenly, for unknown reasons, departed this life. Now everyone wondered how that could happen, and when word went out about an unhappy love, the whole younger generation grew excited, as did the whole middle class when it was said that he had encountered some small annoyances in higher society. Everyone wanted to learn the details. Then *Werther* appeared with an elaborate description which, it was believed, reflected the life and character of this particular young man. The locale and personality held true, and since the portrayal was also very realistic, people now felt fully informed and satisfied. On the other hand, a closer inspection showed that much did *not* fit, after all, and the truth seekers were faced with an intolerable task, since critical analysis cannot but raise a hundred doubts. It was impossible to get to the bottom of things, for the portions of my own life and sorrows used for the composition could not be deciphered. As an unnoticed young person, I had not gone about my business in secret, but certainly in private.

While at work I had not been unaware of how greatly advantaged that artist¹¹⁸ had been who was given the opportunity to fashion a Venus from his combined studies of several beauties; so I also took the liberty of forming my Lotte out of the figures and characteristics of several pretty girls, even though her chief traits were taken from the dearest of them. Therefore the inquisitive public could discover similarities with various young women, and these ladies themselves were not altogether indifferent about passing for the right one. But these multiple Lottes caused me endless torment, because everyone who just looked at me would insist on knowing where the real Lotte lived. Like Nathan with his three rings¹¹⁹ I tried to rescue myself with an evasion; but while this may be suitable for higher personages, it cannot satisfy either the devout public or the reading public. I hoped to be rid of these awkward inquiries after a while, but they have accompanied me through my entire life. On journeys I tried to escape them by traveling incognito, but even this expedient unexpectedly failed me, and so the author of that little work, if he had indeed done something wrong and hurtful, was sufficiently, nay, excessively punished for it by these unavoidable importunities.

Being oppressed in this way, he grew only too aware that a vast gulf separates authors and their public, although, fortunately for them, neither has any concept of it. He had long realized that all introductions are consequently in vain, for the harder one tries to explain one's intentions, the more confusion results. Furthermore an author may write as long an introduction as he pleases, the public will still continue to make the very demands of him he was trying to avert. Likewise I soon became acquainted with a related peculiarity of readers, which strikes us as being particularly comic when their criticism is printed. Namely, they suffer from the delusion that, by having accomplished something, one becomes their debtor, who will always be far in arrears of their real wants and wishes, although shortly beforehand, when they had not yet seen our work, they had not the slightest notion that such a thing existed or was even possible. And aside from all this, the greatest good fortune or misfortune was that everyone wanted to meet this strange young author who had emerged so unexpectedly and boldly. They wanted to see him, speak to him, hear something about him even at a distance, and so he had to experience a most remarkable onrush of people that was sometimes pleasant, sometimes disagreeable, but always distracting. For the beginnings of many works lay before him, indeed enough to occupy him for several years if he had been able to keep at them with his usual devotion. But he had been dragged from the quiet dusk and darkness, which is the only atmosphere that fosters pure works of art, out into the noisy daylight, where other people demand one's attention, where one is confused both by their interest and the lack of it, by praise and by censure. These outward contacts never conform to the stage reached by our inward culture, and since they cannot help us, they must of necessity hurt us.

But what prevented the author from treating and finishing larger works more than all these daily distractions was the desire which had gripped his comrades to dramatize anything of significance that happened in life. The real meaning of this technical term (for such it was in that productive company) will be explained here. Stimulated on some very happy days by our intellectual companionship, we acquired the habit of taking material otherwise preserved whole for use in longer compositions, and splintering it up for short momentary presentations. A single simple event, a felicitous word (naive or even silly), a misunderstanding, a paradox, a witty remark, personal peculiarities or habits, even a meaningful facial expression, and anything else that may occur in the course of a varied, tumultuous life—all of this was presented in the form of dialogue, of question and answer, of a lively action, or of a play, sometimes in prose, but frequently in verse.

This exercise, which we practiced with genius and passion, reinforced in us a genuinely poetic way of thinking. Namely, we allowed objects,

events, and persons to exist as they were, with all relationships intact, and only tried to see them clearly and depict them vividly. All judgments, whether approving or disapproving, were to be expressed in living forms moving before the eyes of the spectator. These productions could be termed animated epigrams, and they were equipped with plenty of pertinent and definite features, but had no cutting edge or sharp points. *The Annual Fair Festival*¹²⁰ is one of those epigrams, or rather, a collection of them. The many masks appearing in it represent real, living members of that society, or at any rate persons connected with it and fairly well known to us, but the meaning of the riddle remained hidden from most people. They all laughed, but few realized that the joke was on their own most individual peculiarities. *The Prologue to Bahrdt's Latest Revelations*¹²¹ may be viewed as a document of a different sort, while the shortest examples are to be found among my miscellaneous poems. A great many have been scattered and lost, and some others cannot be easily found. Those that appeared in print only served to increase the public commotion and curiosity about the author, while those circulated in manuscript form regaled the ever-expanding circle of closest friends. Dr. Bahrdt, who was in Giessen at the time, paid me a visit and seemed polite and sincere. He made jokes about the *Prologue* and wanted to be on friendly terms with me. But we young people never attended a sociable party without continuing to take quietly malicious delight in recognizing the peculiarities we had noticed in others and successfully depicted.

It by no means displeased the young author to be gaped at as a literary meteor, but he was also modestly eager to show his respect for the nation's most trusted men, among whom the splendid Justus Möser must be mentioned before all others.¹²² This incomparable man's short essays pertaining to civil life had appeared in print for several years in the *Osnabrück Intelligencer* and were pointed out to me by Herder, who neglected nothing of value that emerged at the time, especially if it was in print. Möser's daughter, Mrs. von Voigts,¹²³ was engaged in collecting these scattered pieces. We could hardly wait for their publication, but I got in touch with her to assure her, with sincere interest, that these striking essays would be of universal benefit and use, even though, with respect to material and form, they were directed to a special group. This word from a not completely unknown stranger was received very well by her and her father, since it removed, for the present, a nagging concern of theirs.

Since all of them were written in the same vein, these short essays constitute a true whole, and they are remarkable and laudable in the highest degree because of the intimate knowledge they show of the body politic. We see how a constitution may rest upon the past but still remain alive. While on the one hand traditions are preserved, on

the other it is impossible to prevent movement and changes in things. Some fear a useful innovation, others take their joy and delight in anything new, even if it is useless, nay, harmful. How objectively the author analyzes the relations between the various trades and professions, as well as the reciprocal connections between the towns, boroughs, and villages! We learn what their prerogatives are, and the legal basis for these, and we are informed about the basic capital of the state and what income it brings. We see possession and its advantages, but also the fees and disadvantages of various kinds, and lastly the manifold industries. Here, likewise, older times are contrasted with modern ones.

We find that Osnabrück, as a member of the Hanseatic League, was very active in trade in the older period. It was remarkably well situated for the conditions of that time, since it could appropriate what the countryside produced and yet was not so far from the sea that it could not be involved there as well. In later times, however, it seemed very much inland, and so has been gradually removed and excluded from the sea trade. How this came about is explained from many viewpoints. There is discussion of the conflict between England and the seacoasts, the harbors and the inland area, and in this connection emphasis is laid on the great advantages enjoyed by those who live by the sea, while serious suggestions are made concerning ways for inland dwellers to acquire these advantages also. Next, we learn a great deal about industries and trades, and how these are being both outstripped by factories and undermined by merchandising. We see their decline as the result of various causes, and this result as the cause of still more decline, in an eternal, scarcely resolvable circle. Yet this honest citizen defines it so clearly that there still seems hope of possible rescue. The author shows throughout how thoroughly he understands the most specific circumstances. Neither his suggestions nor his advice are without foundation, and yet they are often not practicable, for which reason he called the collection *Patriotic Fantasies*, although everything in them is confined to the real and possible.

However, since all public matters are rooted in family affairs, he next turns his glance primarily in that direction. We find that the objects of his serious and jocular observations are the changes in manners and customs, clothing, diet, domestic life, and education. One would have to rubricate everything that happens in the civil and moral world if one wanted to make an exhaustive list of the subjects he treats. And his treatment is an admirable one. A perfect public official is speaking to the people in a weekly gazette, in order to explain to each individual, from the proper perspective, the things undertaken or executed by a reasonable, benevolent government. But this is by no means done in a didactic way; on the contrary, the forms are so varied they could be called poetic, and at any rate are to be classified as rhetorical, in the

best sense of the word. He is always elevated above his subject and manages to give a cheerful view of the gravest matters. Half hidden behind one mask or another, or speaking in his own person, he is always complete and detailed, but at the same time lighthearted, somewhat ironical, absolutely thorough, upright, well meaning, and sometimes even blunt and vehement. All this is done so judiciously that one has to admire the author's wit, understanding, facility, skill, taste, and character, all at the same time. With regard to his choice of generally useful subject matter, deep insight, wide-ranging vision, felicitous treatment, and both genuine and joyous humor, I can compare him with none but Franklin.

A man like this could make a tremendous impression on us and have the greatest influence on a younger generation that also wanted to do something excellent, and was on the verge of attaining it. We were convinced that we could imitate the forms of his discourse, but who dared hope to master such rich substance and to handle even the most recalcitrant subject matter with so much freedom?

But it is our loveliest and sweetest illusion—and we should not abandon it, even though it causes us much trouble in life—that it may be possible for us to assimilate what we esteem and respect, indeed produce and present it from within ourselves.

Book Fourteen

Now, along with that widespread public movement, there was another, which perhaps had greater significance for the author since it was taking place in his immediate vicinity. His friends of longer standing took a somewhat proprietary interest in the works that were presently causing such a sensation, having known them already in manuscript, and were triumphant about the great success they had so boldly predicted. New sympathizers joined them, mainly persons who felt a creative potential in themselves, or hoped to arouse and foster one.

Among the former, Lenz stood out most vividly, and quite strangely. This remarkable individual's outward appearance has already been described, and his talent for humor favorably noted. Now I want to speak of his character more in terms of results than of actions, for it would be impossible to follow him through the vagaries of his career and to give a portrayal of his peculiarities.

We know about the self-torment which was fashionable then, in the absence of trouble from the outside or from others, and how it particularly afflicted the best intellects. Things that worry ordinary, unself-conscious persons only temporarily, and which they try to dismiss from their minds, were keenly observed, considered, and preserved in writings, letters, and diaries by the better men. But whereas they made very strict moral demands on themselves and others, they were extremely lax in their actions, and the arrogance resulting from this imperfect self-knowledge led to the strangest practices and some rude behavior. However, this relentless self-observation was authorized by the new empirical psychology, which did not exactly condemn everything that inwardly disturbs us, but could not sanction it all either; and so an endless, never-to-be-settled dispute arose. In leading and sustaining it, Lenz surpassed the other idle or semi-idle fellows who were undermining their inner selves, and thus he generally suffered from the sentiments of the time, which the portrayal of Werther was meant to allay. But an individual style distinguished him from all the others, who could only be accounted thoroughly candid, honest souls. Namely, he had a marked inclination to intrigue, intrigue not for any real purpose, any rational, selfish, attainable end, but intrigue for its own sake. He always set himself some whimsical goal, and so never lacked for entertainment. In this way, as long as he lived, he always imagined himself to be a rogue: both his love and his hatred were imaginary, and he treated his ideas and feelings arbitrarily, so that he would always have something to do. He adopted the most preposterous means in his at-

tempt to lend reality to his inclinations and disinclinations, and himself continually destroyed what he had done. And so he never benefited anyone he loved, or injured anyone he hated, and on the whole he only seemed to sin so that he might punish himself, and to intrigue so that he might graft a new fiction on an old one.

His talent proceeded from genuine profundity and inexhaustible creativity. Tenderness, versatility, and subtlety all struggled for dominance in it, and in spite of its great beauty it was sickly. One could not fail to recognize the great features in his works: A lovely delicacy steals its way through the most absurd, the most baroque nonsense, the latter of a kind scarcely pardonable even for such fundamental and unaffected humor, for such genuine comic talent. Although his days were composed of pure nothingness, he made it seem important with his bustling activity. He could well idle away many hours because his memory was so good that the time he did spend reading was always very profitable to him and supplied his singular mentality with manifold subject matter.

He had been sent to Strassburg with some Livonian noblemen, who could hardly have made a more unfortunate choice of mentor. The elder of the barons returned for a while to his homeland, leaving behind a sweetheart to whom he was deeply attached. In order to fend off the second brother, who was also wooing this young woman, and her other admirers, and to keep this precious heart safe for his absent friend, Lenz himself now resolved to feign love for the girl, or, if you will, actually to fall in love with her. He pursued this thesis of his with the most obstinate adherence to the ideal he had made of her, and refused to perceive that he and the others were only a joke and an amusement to her. So much the better! For it was just a game to him too, which could go on that much longer because she responded to him just as playfully, by turns drawing him near, repulsing him, recalling him, and slighting him. One may rest assured that when he came to his senses, as he occasionally did, he congratulated himself quite smugly on this stratagem.

Moreover he, like his charges, lived mostly with the officers of the garrison, which experience may well account for the curious views later presented in his comedy *The Soldiers*.¹²⁴ Meanwhile this early acquaintanceship with the military had the peculiar result that he considered himself a great expert on army life, and in fact he eventually did study this subject in such detail that he later wrote a long memorandum about it for the French minister of war, with the highest expectations of success. He saw the defects of the profession quite well, but the cures he suggested were ridiculous and impractical. Yet he was firmly convinced he could win great influence at court through this and showed little gratitude to the friends who used both arguments and

active opposition to prevent him from sending off this fantastic work, which was already neatly copied, accompanied with a letter, placed in an envelope, and formally addressed. Subsequently he burned it.

Orally, and later on in writing, he had confided to me all the labyrinthine, zigzag movements he had made in respect to that young woman. The poetry that he could inject into the most commonplace things often astonished me, and I importuned him to fertilize the seed of this diffuse adventure with wit, and make a little novel of it. But that was not his strong point, and he could not feel at ease except when he lost himself in infinite detail and spun away purposelessly on an endless thread. On the basis of these preliminaries, it may be possible one day, in some fashion, to describe his career up to the time when he lapsed into insanity.¹²⁵ For the present I shall stay with what is most immediate and really pertinent here.

Hardly had *Götz von Berlichingen* appeared, when Lenz sent me a lengthy essay. It was written on cheap scrap paper, which is what he customarily used, without the slightest margin left on top or below, or on the sides. These pages were entitled "Concerning Our Marriage," and, were they still available,¹²⁶ would be more enlightening to us at present than they were to me then, when I was still very much in the dark about him and his nature. The main goal of this long-winded piece of writing was to compare my talent with his. Sometimes he seemed to subordinate himself to me, at other times to claim equality, but it was all done with such humorous and graceful touches that I was glad to accept the views he was trying to foist on me, all the more so since I really esteemed his gifts very highly. I only kept emphasizing that he should abandon his formless ramblings, discipline himself, and use his inborn creative gifts with artistic restraint. I returned his trust most amicably, and because he insisted on a most ardent connection¹²⁷ in these pages (as, to begin with, the strange title indicated), I informed him from now on about everything, both the works I had finished and those I was planning. For his part, he sent me his manuscripts one by one, *The Private Tutor*, *The New Menozza*, *The Soldiers*, his imitations of Plautus, and that English play he had translated¹²⁸ as a supplement to the *Notes concerning the Theater*.

In the latter I was rather taken aback when in his laconic foreword he gave the impression that the contents of this essay, which vehemently attacked the theater of classical rules, had been revealed in a lecture some years earlier to a group of friends of literature—at a time, then, before *Götz* had been written. It seemed rather problematical that Lenz's Strassburg connections would include a literary circle unknown to me. But I let it pass and soon procured him publishers for this and his other works, without having the slightest suspicion that he had cho-

sen me as the primary object of his imaginary hatred, and as the victim of a fantastic and capricious persecution.

Only in passing, and to keep things in order, I shall mention one more good comrade who was among our number, although not exceptionally gifted. His name was Wagner,¹²⁹ and he was a member first of the Strassburg, then of the Frankfurt group. Not without intelligence, talent, and education, he showed himself to be a striver, and so he was welcome. He also attached himself faithfully to me, and since I never made a secret of my plans, I told him, as well as others, about my intentions with *Faust*, especially about Gretchen's catastrophe. He seized on the motif and used it for a tragedy, *The Infanticide*. It was the first time that anyone had stolen a plan of mine, and I was angry, although I did not hold a grudge against him afterwards. Subsequently, I have experienced my share of similar plagiarisms and anticipations, but I have no right to complain, since I have delayed with so many of my projects and ideas, and discussed them so unnecessarily.

Orators and writers know the great effect of contrasts, and therefore like to make use of them, however contrived and farfetched they may be. Therefore the present author finds it all the more pleasant that a marked contrast has been offered him in speaking of Klinger¹³⁰ after Lenz. They were of the same age, and in their youth strove with and beside each other. Lenz, however, was a transient meteor who passed only momentarily across the horizon of German literature and suddenly disappeared, leaving no trace behind in life. Klinger, on the other hand, has maintained himself up to the present as an influential author and active official. I shall now leave off making the obvious comparison and say of him only what is necessary, since the many things he has accomplished and effected were not done in secret but are still well remembered and honored in smaller and larger circles.

Klinger's outward appearance—for I always prefer to begin with this—was very good. Nature had given him a tall, slim, well-proportioned figure and regular features. He was particular about his appearance, dressed neatly, and could be called the handsomest member of our whole little group. His demeanor was neither complaisant nor aloof, and it was mild, unless he was seething inwardly.

A girl is loved for what she is, a youth for what he promises to be, and so I became Klinger's friend as soon as I became acquainted with him. He made a good impression with his unfeigned cordiality, and his unmistakably resolute character inspired confidence. A serious attitude had been instilled in him early on: he had to provide for his equally handsome and worthy sister, and for a widowed mother who needed such children to sustain her. Everything he was, he had obtained and accomplished on his own, so that no one took it amiss if a strain of

proud independence was evident in his manner. He possessed to a high degree those pronounced natural aptitudes common to all highly gifted persons: the ability to grasp things easily, an excellent memory, and a talent for language. But he seemed to have less regard for these than for the firmness and perseverance which, likewise innate, had developed in him to the full, owing to his circumstances.

Rousseau's works could not fail to have exceptional appeal for such a youth. *Emile* was virtually his Bible, and its sentiments could the more easily captivate him since they were exerting a universal influence over the cultivated world. Indeed they meant even more to him than others because he too was a child of nature, and he too had started at the bottom. What others were asked to relinquish, he had never possessed; circumstances they were supposed to escape had never constrained him; and so he could be viewed as one of the purest disciples of that nature gospel. In view of his serious striving and his conduct as human being and son, he could very well exclaim, "Everything is good when it issues from the hand of nature!"—But disagreeable experiences also forced the concluding sentence on him: "Everything deteriorates under the hand of man!"¹³¹ He did not have to struggle with himself, but with the traditional world, from whose chains the citizen of Geneva meant to free us. This youth's circumstances often made the struggle hard and painful, and he felt himself too forcibly thrown back on his own resources to find any joy and happiness in the process of education. Rather, he had to push and storm his way through, and so a tinge of bitterness crept into his nature, which he afterwards sometimes nurtured and nourished, but mostly combated and conquered.

To the extent that I can recall his creative works, they show rigorous intelligence, an active imagination, skillful observation of human diversity, and portrayals of the characteristic differences between the sexes. His girls and boys are winsome and artless, his youths ardent, his men straightforward and sensible, and the unfavorably depicted figures are not too greatly exaggerated. He does not lack cheerfulness and good humor, or wit and clever ideas. Allegory and symbols are at his command. He is able to entertain us pleasantly, and our enjoyment would be even purer if he did not occasionally spoil his cheerful, significant jests for us, and for himself, with bitter malevolence. But this is just what gives him individuality; and indeed what gives such great variety to the species of those who live by the pen is the fact that each author fluctuates between perception and error, in theory, and between animation and annihilation, in practice.

Klinger was one of those people who have come up in the world by using their own resources, their own hearts and intelligence. This was accomplished with and within a larger mass, whose members vigorously

and effectively spoke a clearly understandable language based on universal nature and national characteristics. Therefore they always felt an extreme aversion to all stereotyped expressions, especially when these, being separated from their living origins, had degenerated into phrases and totally lost their first, fresh significance. Such men declare their opposition not only to new opinions, views, and systems, but also to new events and to significant emergent persons who either proclaim or effect great changes. They should surely not be blamed for their attitude, because they can see how such things shake the foundations of their existence and cultural development.

However, the perseverance of a staunch character like his becomes even more admirable when it lasts through a lifetime spent in the world of affairs, and when its way of dealing with situations, although seeming harsh, nay, arbitrary to some people, most surely attains the goal. This was the case with him, for he rose to significant posts and retained them, not through compliancy (which, to be sure, has never been the virtue of native sons of free cities), but because he was efficient, solid, and honest. While continuing to work with the approval and favor of the highest patrons, he never forgot his old friends and the path he had trodden. Indeed he stubbornly tried to keep his memories intact, whatever the degree of distance and separation. Thus it is surely worth mentioning that he, like a latter-day Archbishop Willigis,¹³² was not too proud to have his escutcheon, which was adorned with the badges of several orders, also include some signs commemorating his earliest days.

It was not long before I also made a connection with Lavater.¹³³ My *Letter of a Pastor to his Colleague* contained some passages that pleased him very well, for they were in perfect harmony with his own sentiments. Since he was never idle for a moment, our correspondence soon became very lively. Just then he was making serious preparations for his larger *Physiognomy*, the introduction to which had already been presented to the public. He requested everybody to send him drawings, silhouettes, and, above all, pictures of Christ; and although my abilities amounted to virtually nothing, he insisted on having me draw a picture of the Savior as I imagined Him to be. Impossible demands of this kind were a source of many jokes for me, and my only defense against his peculiarities was to air my own.

Great numbers of people disbelieved in physiognomy, or at best considered it uncertain and misleading, and even many of those who were well disposed to Lavater felt an itch to test him, and possibly play a trick on him. In Frankfurt he had placed orders with a not unskillful painter for the profiles of several renowned persons. The dispatcher permitted himself the joke of first sending off Bahrdt's portrait in place of mine, and this in turn prompted a lively but thunderous

epistle, full of trump cards and protestations that this was not my picture, plus whatever else Lavater had to say on this occasion in confirmation of his physiognomic doctrine. He was more willing to accept the genuine picture sent afterwards, but here was an early indication of his coming conflicts with both painters and individuals. The former could never work truly and accurately enough for him, while the latter, all their merits notwithstanding, always fell far short of the idea he cherished of mankind and the human being, and to a certain extent he was repulsed by the special traits that make one an individual person.

The concept of humanity that he had gradually evolved on the basis of his own humanity was very closely related to the idea of Christ that was alive within him; therefore he did not understand how anyone could live and breathe and not also be a Christian. My relationship to the Christian religion was only a matter of heart and mind, and I had not the slightest conception of that physical kinship toward which Lavater inclined. Consequently I was offended by the vehement importunity of this intelligent, sensitive man when he attacked me, as well as Mendelssohn and others, and declared that we must either join him as Christians, Christians of his type, or we must draw him over to *our* side and likewise convince *him* of the source of our consolation.¹³⁴ This challenge, which was in such direct opposition to the liberal secularism of which I was gradually becoming an adherent, did not have a very good effect on me. All unsuccessful attempts at conversion make the person selected as proselyte stubborn and obdurate, and this was the case with me, especially when Lavater finally came up with the hard choice: "Either a Christian or an atheist!" To this I declared that if he would not grant me the Christianity I had hitherto cherished I might well decide on atheism, particularly since I saw that nobody really knew what either term meant.

As vehement as this exchange of letters was, it did not mar our relationship. Lavater was incredibly patient, persevering, and persistent. He was sure of his teachings, and with his resolute intention of spreading his convictions throughout the world he was content, if something could not be done with forcefulness, to achieve it through gentleness and watchful waiting. Moreover he was one of those rare happy individuals whose outward and inward callings are in complete harmony, and whose cultural development has been consistent from the elementary to the more advanced stages, so that their capacities evolve as nature intended. Being endowed with the most sensitive moral instincts, he decided to become a clergyman. He had the benefit of the necessary instruction and demonstrated much ability, yet was never inclined to the kind of education that can really be called scholarly. For he too, though born so much earlier than we, was seized by the freedom-and-nature spirit of the age, which whispered very seductively into everyone's ear: you

have enough material and content in yourself, and so do not need much outward assistance; everything just depends on developing them properly. The clergyman's duty to influence people morally in the everyday sense, and religiously in a higher sense, was perfectly in accord with his disposition. To communicate to people the sincere and pious sentiments that he felt, and to arouse the same in them, was his strongest impulse as a young man, while his favorite occupation was observing himself and others. The former was made easy for him, indeed forced on him, by his inner sensitivity, the latter by his keen perception of external things. Yet he was not innately contemplative, and he had no gift for genuine presentation. Instead he felt driven to do his utmost to be active and effective, and I have never known anyone who was more uninterruptedly busy than he. However, our inner moral nature is anchored in external conditions, whether we belong to a family, a class, a guild, a town, or a nation. Therefore, if he wanted to be effective, he also had to touch all these externals and set them in motion, which of course caused many a clash, many a complication, especially since the community of which he was born a member traditionally enjoyed a laudable freedom, though within very specific and well-defined limits. Even in boyhood, the citizen of a republic gets accustomed to thinking about public affairs and to expressing his opinion about them. As a guild member, already in the first bloom of youth he sees himself in a position to give or withhold his vote. He cannot form just and independent judgments unless first of all he is convinced of the worth of his fellow citizens; he must learn to know them, he must inquire about their attitudes and abilities, and so, while trying to study others, he must constantly return to his own bosom.

Lavater got early practice in such relationships, and this particular activity in life seems to have occupied him more than language studies and the related critical analysis which is both their foundation and goal. In later years, when he had attained an infinite breadth of knowledge and understanding, he would still very often state, in jest and in earnest, that he was not a learned man; and it must be ascribed to this same lack of profound study that he clung to the letter of the Bible, nay, of the Bible translation, where, to be sure, he found sufficient nourishment and assistance for his designs and objectives.

But quite soon he felt his lively personality stifled in that torpid atmosphere of guilds and corporations. It is no trouble for a young man to be just, for a pure heart abhors the injustice of which it has not yet become guilty. The oppressive deeds of a provincial governor were clearly seen by the citizens, but were not so easily brought before a court of law. Lavater joined forces with a friend, and together they sent an anonymous threat to the culprit. The affair became public, and there was no alternative but to investigate it. The guilty bailiff was

punished, but the instigators of this just procedure were criticized, if not rebuked. In a well-constituted state even justice must not be done in an unjust manner.

On a journey Lavater made through Germany he got in touch with learned and discriminating men, but this only confirmed him in his own thoughts and convictions. When he returned home, he became increasingly independent in his actions. As a good, noble person himself, he intuitively had a glorious concept of humanity. This may have been negated in his experience by all the obvious defects that prevent anyone from being perfect; but these defects were compensated for by the idea of a divinity that, at the midpoint of history, had lowered itself into human nature and thus restored to perfection what had originally been cast in its own image.

For the moment, that is enough about the beginnings of this remarkable man; and now, first of all, an amusing description of our personal meeting and association! Our correspondence had not been carried on very long when he announced to me that he was planning a Rhine journey and would soon stop in Frankfurt. Immediately the public was in the greatest ferment. Everyone was curious to see such a remarkable man, and many hoped to profit in their religious and moral development. The skeptics hoped to distinguish themselves with their significant objections, the egotists were sure of confusing and abashing him with arguments they personally found very convincing, and these and many other agreeable and disagreeable experiences always await a famous man when he tries to deal with this motley world.

Our first encounter was cordial: we embraced most amicably, and I found him to be exactly as his many pictures had represented him. What I saw before me in the flesh was an individual, someone unique and distinctive in a way not seen before or since. On the other hand, some singular exclamations by him immediately betrayed that he had expected me to be different. But, as my innate and acquired realism demanded, I assured him that it had pleased God and nature to make me so, and we would have to accept it. Next, of course, we at once began discussing the most significant points of disagreement in our letters, but we were not given the time to treat these in detail, and I experienced something quite new to me.

When we others wanted to discuss what concerned our hearts and minds, we would always retire from any crowd, indeed from our own group, because it is hard to reach an understanding even with just a few people, given the many ways of thinking and the various degrees of cultural development. But Lavater was of quite a different mind: he loved to spread his influence far and wide, and was at his best in the midst of a throng, which his great gift for physiognomy uniquely suited him to teach and entertain. He was endowed with an accurate ability

to discern persons and dispositions, and with a swift glance he could tell what people's feelings were. If this prompted an honest confession or an ingenuous question, he could respond properly, and to everyone's satisfaction, from his great abundance of inward and outward experience. The profound gentleness of his glance, the manifest sweetness of his lips, even the Swiss dialect that artlessly colored his High German, in addition to many other distinctive features, filled everyone he addressed with the most agreeable calmness of mind. Indeed the fact that his chest was concave and he had a slightly bent-over posture did much to help the rest of the company adjust to his overwhelming presence. He had a very unruffled and skillful way of parrying arrogance and egotism: he would seem to yield, but then suddenly, as though it were a diamond shield, he would hold up a great idea, one which would never have occurred to his dull-witted opponent, and then would so pleasantly moderate the light issuing from it that such people, at least in his presence, would feel instructed and convinced. Perhaps the influence continued to work on some of them, for surely egotistical persons can also be good ones. It is only a question of rubbing gently to break down the hard shell that surrounds the fruitful kernel.

On the other hand, he was greatly embarrassed when persons were present whose ugly appearance could not but stamp them indelibly as sworn enemies of his doctrine about the significance of forms. They would customarily employ their adequate common sense, and indeed other gifts and talents, in a passionately malevolent, pettily skeptical fashion to invalidate a doctrine that seemed to insult them personally. For there are not many people as magnanimous as Socrates, who would have interpreted his goatish exterior as proof that he had to *earn* his morality. The harsh obduracy of such opponents was a fearful thing to Lavater, but he was not without passion in combating it, just as the fire in a forge must hiss at the resistant ore as if the latter were both tedious and hostile.

Under such circumstances there could be no thought of an intimate conversation relating only to ourselves. However, I found that to observe his method of handling people was very instructive to me, though not of constructive help, for my situation was quite different from his. None of the efforts of a moral teacher are in vain, because more of them thrive than the Parable of the Sower all too modestly allows. But unless a work of art is actually acknowledged to be such, its creator must view it as a total loss, and we know how impatient I was made by my dear interested readers, and for what reasons I was very loath to comply with their demands. I felt all too keenly the contrast between Lavater's influence and mine: his was effective in his presence, mine in my absence. Anyone dissatisfied with him at a distance became reconciled in his vicinity, while whoever judged me to be an amiable person

on the basis of my works was sorely disappointed to encounter someone stiff and unapproachable.

Merck, who had at once come over from Darmstadt, played Mephistopheles and especially ridiculed the importunities of the womenfolk. When some of them inspected the prophet's living quarters, giving particular attention to his bedchamber, the rascal said that these pious souls wanted to see where our Lord had been laid.—In spite of all that, Merck had to submit to exorcism like everyone else, for Lips,¹³⁵ who accompanied Lavater, drew his portrait as meticulously and honestly as those of the notable and unnotable persons which would some day be assembled in the great work on physiognomy.

For me, this association with Lavater was extremely important and instructive. His urgent promptings stirred my calm, artistically contemplative nature, admittedly not to my immediate advantage, since it only aggravated the distraction that had already taken hold of me. But so many things were brought up for discussion between us that I felt a very great longing to continue our conversations. Therefore I resolved to accompany him on his way to Ems, so that on the journey, while we were enclosed in the carriage and separated from the world, we could freely debate the subjects which mutually concerned us.

Meanwhile the conversations between Lavater and Miss von Klettenberg were notable, and of great consequence for me. Here two decided Christians confronted each other, and I could very clearly see how the same creed can be altered to fit the sentiments of different persons. It was said so often in those tolerant times that every individual has his own religion, his own way of venerating God. Although I did not actually put this in words, still I could detect in the present case that men and women require a different Savior. Miss von Klettenberg's attitude to hers was as to a lover to whom one yields oneself unconditionally, looking to him for all joy and hope, and without any doubt or hesitancy entrusting to him one's destiny in life. Lavater, on the other hand, treated his like a friend whom one emulates lovingly and without envy, whose merits one acknowledges and lauds to the skies, and for this very reason makes every effort to resemble and equal. What a difference between these two approaches! And it expresses in general the spiritual needs of the two sexes. It may also explain why more sensitive men have turned to the Mother of God, why they have, like Sannazaro,¹³⁶ devoted their life and talents to her as the paragon of feminine beauty and virtue, and have dallied with the divine Child only incidentally.

Both from the conversations where I was present, and from the revelations each made to me privately, I discovered how my two friends agreed and disagreed. I could not concur fully with either, for my Christ

had also assumed a form in accord with my own ideas. However, because they would not accept my concept, I tormented them with all sorts of paradoxes and extreme ideas until they were on the point of becoming impatient, and then I would depart with a joke.

The conflict between knowledge and faith was not yet the order of the day, but these two words and the concepts associated with them did occasionally come up for discussion, and true contemners of the world asserted that the one was as unreliable as the other. Therefore I took it into my head to declare myself in support of both, but still failed to win my friends' approval. As regards faith, I said, everything depended on the act of believing, whereas it made no difference at all *what* one believed. Faith was a great feeling of security about the present and future, and this security was based on one's trust in a super-great, super-powerful, and unfathomable Being. Everything depended (I said) on the unshakable firmness of this trust. Our conception of this Being, however, depended on our other capacities, nay, on the circumstances, and was quite unimportant. Faith was a holy vessel, and each individual was ready, to the best of his ability, to offer up into it his feelings, his reason, and his powers of imagination. Quite the opposite was true of knowledge. It was not a question of knowing, but of *what* one knew, and how well and how much one knew. Consequently one could argue about knowledge, because it was susceptible to correction, extension, and contraction. Knowledge (I said) began with the single item, was infinite and without form, and could never be comprehended as a whole, except perhaps in a visionary way. Therefore it remained the exact opposite of faith.

Half-truths of this kind and the maze of errors generated by them may be stimulating and entertaining when presented in poetry, but in real life they disrupt and confuse conversation. So I gladly left Lavater alone with those who wanted to be edified by and with him, and I found my self-denial sufficiently rewarded in the journey to Ems we began together. We were attended by beautiful summer weather, and Lavater was cheerful and delightful. For although his mind was fixed on religion and morality, he was not at all overscrupulous, and did not remain cold when other hearts were made merry and gay by occurrences in life. He was sympathetic, clever, witty, and liked others to be the same, except that things had to remain within the bounds set by his delicate sentiments. If anyone ventured beyond these in any way, he would clap this rash person on the shoulder and call him back to propriety with a simple-hearted "Be good!" spoken in Swiss dialect. This trip contributed in many ways to my education and enlivenment, which, however, consisted more in learning about his character than in regulating and developing my own. When I saw him immediately sur-

rounded again by all sorts of company in Ems, I returned to Frankfurt, for my little business affairs were just now at a point where I could hardly abandon them.

But I was not to settle down in peace so soon, for Basedow¹³⁷ arrived and affected and stimulated me from a different side. A more marked contrast could not be found than that between these two men. Even Basedow's appearance indicated oppositeness. Whereas Lavater's features opened candidly to the observer, Basedow's were contracted and as though drawn back inside. Lavater's eyes were clear and innocent, under very broad eyelids; but Basedow's were deep-set, small, black, and sharp, looking out from under bushy eyebrows, which were not at all like the very gentle arches of brown hair trimming Lavater's frontal bone. Basedow's hoarse, vehement voice, his rapid, sharp utterances, his rather sarcastic laugh, his quick changes of subject in conversation, and whatever his other distinguishing traits were, all of these were in direct contrast to the personal qualities and conduct with which Lavater had pampered us. Basedow too received many visitors in Frankfurt, and his great intellectual gifts were admired, but he was not a man who could edify spirits or guide them. His sole concern was to cultivate better the great field he had marked out for himself, so that mankind could dwell there in future more comfortably and naturally; and he hastened toward this goal only too directly.

I could not reconcile myself to Basedow's plans, nor even clearly understand his objectives. It was much to my liking that he wanted all instruction to be lively and natural, and I felt it was laudable that the ancient languages should be used in a present-day context. I also gladly subscribed to whatever his plans were for promoting activity and a fresher world view. But I was displeased that the drawings in his *Elementary Work*¹³⁸ were even more abstruse than the subject matter itself. In the real world, after all, only what is possible stands together, and that is why, in spite of great variety and apparent confusion, the world still has some order in all of its parts. In the *Elementary Work*, however, the world is thoroughly split up, and for the sake of relating one concept to another, things are juxtaposed which in our view seem quite disparate. Accordingly, the book lacks those comprehensible-methodical merits which must be granted to similar works by Amos Comenius.

Still more curious and difficult to grasp than his doctrine was Basedow's behavior. The purpose of his journey was to win over the public for his philanthropic enterprise by means of his personality and, as a matter of fact, to open not so much their hearts as their pocketbooks. He could speak grandly and convincingly about his project, and everyone gladly went along with his assertions. But in the most inexplicable way he wounded the feelings of the people from whom he wished to

get contributions, indeed he needlessly offended them, since he could not repress his opinions and crotchets on religious subjects. In this, too, Basedow showed himself to be the antithesis of Lavater. Whereas the latter accepted the Bible and its whole contents, word for word, as the literal truth and applicable to the present day, Basedow felt the most restless itch to renovate everything and to remodel not only the articles of faith but also the external church rituals to suit his own firmly held whims. But his most merciless and reckless treatment was reserved for those ideas that are not derived directly from the Bible but from its interpretation, namely from those expressions, philosophical terms, or physical similes used by the church fathers and councils when they were trying to elucidate the inexpressible or to combat heretics. In a crude and irresponsible manner, he declared himself in front of everyone to be the most outright foe of the Trinity, and he could not stop arguing against this generally accepted mystery. I too had to put up with a great deal in private conversations with him, and was repeatedly exposed to the *hypostasis* and the *ousia*, as well as the *prosopon*.¹³⁹ In self-defense, I used the weapons of paradox, outflanked him in his opinions, and dared to combat his rashness with even greater rashness. This gave new stimulus to my spirit, and, since Basedow was much more widely read, and also more skillful than an amateur like me in employing the fencing tricks of disputation, I had to exert myself more and more as we discussed the weightier points.

This splendid opportunity to get a little practice, if not actual enlightenment, could not be allowed to pass by so quickly. I prevailed upon my father and my friends to take over the most necessary business, and then drove away a second time from Frankfurt, in the company of Basedow. But how different it seemed, when I recalled the charm exerted by Lavater! Being pure himself, Lavater created a pure environment. At his side, one became virginal, so as not to bring him in contact with anything repulsive. Basedow, on the other hand, was much too self-centered to pay attention to anything outside himself. To begin with, it was exceedingly annoying that he incessantly smoked bad tobacco; and worse, he would no sooner finish one pipe than he would light his tinder again, and the latter, although it ignited fast, was impurely prepared and evil-smelling, so that his initial puffs fouled the air intolerably every time. I named this preparation "Basedow's stink-fungus" and wanted it listed in natural history under this title. He thought this very amusing, and to my great disgust gave me a detailed analysis of the loathsome substance, taking much malicious pleasure in my repugnance. This was one of the deep-rooted bad traits of this exceptionally talented man: he was a tease who liked to jeer spitefully at the most innocuous persons. He could not bear to leave anyone in peace, but would provoke with grinning mockery spoken in a hoarse

voice, would embarrass with an unexpected question, and would laugh bitterly when he achieved his goal. However, he did not object if the other person quickly regained his composure and retorted in kind.

How much greater now was my longing for Lavater! He also seemed happy to see me again, and confided many a bit of information he had gathered, especially concerning the various characters of our fellow guests, among whom he had already been able to win many friends and adherents. I found many an old acquaintance myself, and in those whom I had not seen for years I began to be aware of something that in youth remains long hidden, namely that men age and women change. The company grew larger every day. There was no end of dancing, and because we were in quite close contact in the two large bathhouses, our good, intimate acquaintance led to all sorts of jokes. Once I disguised myself as a village clergyman, while a male friend of some renown played his wife. Our exaggerated courtesy became rather a trial for the elegant company, but the final result was that we put everyone into a good humor. There was no lack of serenading in the evening, at midnight, and in the morning, and we younger people got very little sleep.

As a contrast to these diversions, I always spent a part of the night with Basedow. He never went to bed, but dictated without ceasing. Sometimes he lay down on a couch and slumbered, while his amanuensis calmly remained sitting, pen in hand, so as to be ready immediately when Basedow, only half awake, would again give free rein to his thoughts. All this took place in a tightly sealed room filled with tobacco and fungus smoke. Every time I refrained from a dance I would leap up the stairs to see Basedow, who was always ready to speak and dispute about any problem whatsoever, and when after some time I would hurry down to the dance again, even before the door was closed behind me, he would take up the thread of his treatise and continue dictating as if nothing had intervened.

We also took many a drive into the countryside together and visited castles, especially those of noblewomen, who were decidedly more receptive to intellectual and spiritual ideas than the men. At Nassau, the home of Mrs. vom Stein,¹⁴⁰ a very venerable lady who enjoyed the most universal esteem, we found a great company. Mrs. von La Roche was likewise present, and there was no dearth of young women and children. Here Lavater was supposed to be led into physiognomic temptation, which mostly consisted of trying to seduce him into taking incidental features for the basic form of a face. But he had a good enough eye not to be deceived. As always, I was expected to certify the truth of Werther's sorrows and identify Lotte's place of residence, an unreasonable demand which I evaded, although not as politely as I might have done. I gathered the children around me and told them

some very curious fairy tales woven around some perfectly familiar objects. The great advantage here was that not a single member of my audience would have considered importuning me about the truth or poetry of these matters.

Basedow broached the only important subject, namely a better education for young people, and he called upon persons of rank and estate to make considerable contributions to this end. However, his arguments and passionate eloquence had hardly succeeded in winning the good will of his listeners, if not convincing them, when he was seized by his evil anti-Trinitarian spirit. Taking no cognizance of his surroundings, he launched into the strangest speeches, which he deemed very religious but which struck the company as altogether blasphemous. We tried to remedy the evil: Lavater with his gentle gravity, I with distracting jokes, and the ladies with diverting walks. But the discord was irreparable. A Christian entertainment promised because Lavater was present, a pedagogical one expected from Basedow, and a sentimental one which I was to provide—they were all broken off and canceled at the same time. On the way home Lavater reproached him, but I punished him in a jocular way. It was a hot day, and tobacco smoke had probably given Basedow an even drier palate. He was desperately longing for a glass of beer, and when, from a distance, he caught sight of an inn along the highway, he very eagerly ordered the coachman to stop there. But just when the man was about to pull up, I shouted to him in a very commanding voice to keep going. In his surprise, Basedow could hardly utter a hoarse contrary order. I kept after the coachman all the more vehemently, and he obeyed me. Basedow cursed me, and was near to pounding me with his fists, but I acted totally unflurried and responded, “Father, calm yourself! You owe me hearty thanks. Fortunately you did not see the beer sign. It is composed of two triangles. Now, ordinarily *one* triangle drives you mad. If you had glimpsed *both* of them we would have had to put you in chains.” This joke made him roar with laughter, while in between he scolded and cursed me, and Lavater exercised patience with both the old fool and the young one.

In mid-July, when Lavater prepared for departure, Basedow thought it advantageous to accompany him, and I had gotten so used to their distinguished company that I could not bear to leave them. Our trip down the Lahn was very pleasant and gladdened heart and mind. Upon viewing a remarkable castle ruin I wrote the song, “High on the ancient tower stands,” in Lips’s album, and seeing that it was well received, in my wicked way I added all sorts of doggerel and nonsense on the next pages in order to spoil the impression. I was pleased to see the splendid Rhine again, and I delighted in the astonishment of those who were enjoying this spectacle for the first time. Then we landed in Coblenz, but wherever we went there were great crowds of people, and

each of us three, in his own way, aroused interest and curiosity. Basedow and I seemed to be competing to see who could be ruder. Lavater behaved rationally and wisely, except that he could not repress his heartfelt opinions, and so, although he meant very well, he appeared very extraordinary to all the people of a middling sort.

A strange mealtime in a Coblenz inn was commemorated by me in some doggerel verses which may be printed now, along with their kindred, in my new edition. I was seated between Lavater and Basedow, and the former was instructing a country parson in the mysteries of the Revelation of St. John, while the latter was trying in vain to prove to an obstinate dancing master that baptism was an antiquated custom by no means intended for our times. And as we moved on farther toward Cologne, I wrote in someone's album:

As though along Emmaus road,
We stormed with paces keen;
On either side the prophets strode,
With worldling me between.

Fortunately this worldling also had a propensity for heavenly thoughts, and this was soon to be stirred in a very special way. Back in Ems I had rejoiced to hear that we were going to meet the Jacobi brothers¹⁴¹ in Cologne, for they were coming there with some other excellent, observant men to see the two remarkable travelers. For my part, I hoped to receive their pardon for some small insults that were a by-product of the general rudeness fostered in us by Herder's caustic humor. We had found much occasion to scoff at the letters and poems in which Gleim and George Jacobi had publicly demonstrated their mutual regard, and we did not reflect that there is just as much smugness involved in spoiling other people's pleasure as there is in giving superfluous compliments to oneself or to one's friends. Consequently some discord had arisen between the upper and lower Rhine, but it was insignificant enough to be easily mediated, and the ladies were preeminently suited for this task. Sophie La Roche had already spoken very well of these noble brothers. Mlle Fahlmer,¹⁴² who had been closely connected with their circle before moving from Düsseldorf to Frankfurt, was proof, with her very tender heart and uncommonly cultivated mind, of the quality of the company in which she had grown up. Gradually she put us to shame by her patience with our harsh south German ways, and she taught us considerateness by making us feel we needed some shown to ourselves. The Jacobis' younger sister, with her ingenuous manner, and Fritz Jacobi's wife, with her great cheerfulness, made those northern regions ever more attractive to our hearts and minds. The latter of these young women was the very sort to charm me completely: sensitive but without a trace of sentimentality, able to express herself

in a lively way, she was a splendid Netherlander who, not because of any sensuous look, but because of her heartiness, was reminiscent of Rubens's women. The ladies mentioned had made both brief and extended visits to Frankfurt and had formed very close ties with my sister, bringing more cheer and responsiveness into her serious, rigid, and somewhat unloving nature. And so, emotionally and intellectually, we were furnished a Düsseldorf and a Pempelfort in Frankfurt.

Accordingly our first meeting in Cologne could be open and unreserved from the start. The ladies' good opinion of us had likewise had its effect at home. I was not treated, as earlier on this journey, like the mere tail of those two great comets. On the contrary, the Jacobis made a point of directing an occasional good word to me, and seemed inclined to hear my ideas as well. I was tired of my former nonsense and impertinence, which were really only a mask for my displeasure that there was so little provision for my heart and spirit on this journey. Therefore my inner self violently rebelled, and this may be why I have so little recollection of the individual occurrences. One's thoughts and the sights one has seen can be recalled to the mind and the imagination, but the heart is not so compliant. It will not revive our lovely feelings, and we are least of all capable of reliving enthusiastic moments, which overtake us unawares and to which we yield unconsciously. Therefore others, who observe us during such moments, have a clearer and purer perception of them than we do ourselves.

Up to now, I had gently evaded religious conversations and had rarely returned sensible answers to reasonable questions, because they seemed far too limited in comparison to what I was seeking. If anyone tried to force his feelings and opinions about my own works on me, especially if he harassed me with the demands of an ordinary intellect and pointed out very positively what I should and should not have done, I would lose patience. The conversation would break off or disintegrate, and no one left with a very favorable impression of me. It would have been much more in tune with my nature to be friendly and tactful, but my heart did not want pedantic instruction. It wanted liberal good will to which it could respond, and true interest that would inspire its devotion. Yet one feeling did get a powerful grip on me and became inexpressibly fascinating: it was the sensation of past and present being one, a perception that introduced a spectral quality into the present. Many of my longer and shorter works express this, and its effect on poems is always salutary, even though the sensation, at the moment when it was aroused directly by life, or in life itself, no doubt seemed strange, inexplicable, and even unpleasant to everyone.

Cologne was a place where the past could have this incalculable effect on me. The "ruins" of the cathedral (for an unfinished work is like a destroyed one), awoke feelings that were familiar to me from Strassburg.

I could not make any artistic judgments because there was at once too much and too little on which to base them. No one was to be found (as would now be possible thanks to our industrious, persevering friends¹⁴³) who could help me through this labyrinth of things finished or just planned, of deeds and intentions, of parts constructed and others only indicated. To be sure, in the company of friends I would admire these remarkable halls and pillars, but when I was there alone I would be plunged into sadness to think that this building of world importance had been abandoned in the midst of construction, still far from completion. Here again was a vast conception that had not been carried out! It really seems as though this piece of architecture only stands there to convince us that nothing can be accomplished by a succession of people over a period of time, and that in arts and deeds a work must spring forth like Minerva, full-grown and armed, from its designer's head in order to materialize.

In these more oppressive than heart-stirring moments I did not suspect that a most tender and beautiful feeling was awaiting me close by. I was taken to the Jabach house,¹⁴⁴ where I was confronted in real and tangible form with something I had previously just imagined. This family had evidently died out long ago, but we found nothing altered in the ground level, which opened into a garden. The floor was decorated in a regular pattern with diamond-shaped tiles of a brownish-red color, there were high, carved chairs with quilted seats and backs, artistically inlaid tabletops on heavy legs, hanging lamps of metal, and an enormous fireplace with the requisite utensils. Everything was typical of those earlier days, and there was nothing new or modern in the whole room except ourselves. Our feelings, already strangely stirred by these things, were immensely heightened and culminated when we saw the large family portrait over the fireplace. The wealthy former owner of this dwelling was shown sitting with his wife and surrounded by their children, all of them as real, fresh, and alive as if it had been yesterday, nay, today; and yet they were long since gone. These fresh, round-cheeked children had also grown old, and without this artistic likeness no memory of them would have survived. Since I was overcome by these impressions, I cannot say how I looked and behaved; but the profoundest depths of my human potentialities and poetic abilities were laid bare by an infinite rush of emotion. Every good and loving force in my inner self must have opened up and gushed forth, because from that moment on, without further investigation and deliberation, those excellent men gave me their trust and affection for life.

In the wake of this union of our minds and souls, when each of us poured out all his feelings, I offered to recite my newest and most cherished ballads. "The King of Thule" and "There was a lover bold enough" were well received, and I delivered them all the more emo-

tionally since my poems were still close to my heart and seldom came over my lips. For when certain persons were present, I was easily inhibited, for fear that they might take my oversensitive feelings amiss. Sometimes I would become confused while reciting and not be able to pick up the thread again, and how often I was accused of willfulness on that account, of having an odd, whimsical nature!

Although I was mostly occupied with writing poetry, which was my real, natural bent, I was no stranger to musings on all sorts of subjects, so that Jacobi's singular, but for him quite natural interest in unfathomable questions was most welcome and congenial to me. There was no conflict between us, either about Christianity, as with Lavater, or about education, as with Basedow. The thoughts which Jacobi communicated to me arose directly from his feelings, and it touched a particular chord in me when, with complete trustfulness, he did not conceal the deepest desires of his soul. From such a curious combination of need, passion, and ideas I could derive only presentiments of things that in future might become clearer for me. Fortunately, I had already taken some steps in this direction, though only preliminary ones. For I had assimilated the life and thought of an extraordinary man, indeed only incompletely and, as it were, furtively; but I had already felt some significant effects from that. The intellect that had affected me so markedly and was to have such a great influence on my whole way of thinking was Spinoza's. For after I had searched everywhere in vain for a means of cultivating my strange personality, I finally happened upon this man's *Ethics*. I could not possibly give an account of what I read out of this work, or into it. Let me just say, I found something in it to calm my emotions, and it seemed to open a broad, free view over the physical and moral world. However, I was particularly captivated by the infinite selflessness that radiated from each of his propositions. That curious statement, "He who loves God rightly must not require God to love him in return," with all the premises on which it rests and all the results issuing from it, pervaded my meditations. To be free of self-interest in everything, and especially in love and friendship, was my highest desire, my maxim, my practice; and that later impudent statement, "If I love you, what concern is that of yours?"¹⁴⁵ came straight from my heart. Moreover, let us not fail to recognize here that the closest unions really result between opposites. Spinoza's all-soothing calmness contrasted with my all-agitating aspirations, while his mathematical method was the reverse of my poetic thinking and composing; and what made me his passionate disciple and most confirmed admirer was precisely that orderly procedure which people felt was inappropriate for moral subject matter. Mind and heart, reason and sense sought each other out in irresistible elective affinity, and by this means a unification of our very disparate natures was accomplished.

But all this was in its first state of effect and counter-effect, seething and fermenting. Fritz Jacobi, whose nature likewise toiled in the depths, was the first whom I permitted to peer into this chaos, and he cordially accepted my trust, returned it, and tried to introduce me to his manner of thinking. He too was conscious of an inexpressible spiritual need, which he too wanted to develop and elucidate from within himself, instead of allaying it with others' help. I could not grasp what he told me about the condition of his inner self, since I was not able to form any conception even of my own state. But he was far ahead of me in his philosophical thinking, even with respect to Spinoza, and he tried to guide and clarify my dim striving. A purely intellectual kinship like this was new to me and aroused a passionate desire for further communication. That night, after we had already parted and withdrawn to our bedchambers, I sought him out once more. Moonlight trembled over the broad river, while we, standing at the window, reveled in the abundant exchange of ideas that springs forth so richly during that splendid time when a friendship is unfolding.

But at the present moment I would be unable to give an account of that inexpressible experience. Clearer in my mind is a drive to the hunting-seat Bensberg, which commands the most splendid view from its location on the right bank of the Rhine. What thoroughly enraptured me there were the wall decorations executed by Weenix.¹⁴⁶ All the animals any hunt can possibly provide were lying strewn about in good order, as though upon the base of a great colonnaded hall, and out beyond them one looked into a broad landscape. That extraordinary man had exerted his talent to the utmost to enliven these lifeless creatures, and had not only equalled nature, but surpassed it—as far as effectiveness was concerned—in his depiction of the most varied animal integuments, bristles, hairs, feathers, antlers, and claws. After having sufficiently admired these works of art in their entirety, we felt compelled to reflect on the ingenious mechanical techniques which had produced these pictures. How human hands could have made them, and with what instruments, was beyond comprehension. The paintbrush was not adequate. Quite special contrivances would have to be used to create such manifold things. We felt the same amazement both on close inspection and from farther off. The means were as admirable as the effect.

The rest of the journey down the Rhine was light-hearted and happy. As the river widens, one's heart is also bidden to expand and look into the distance. We arrived at Düsseldorf and went from there to Pempelfort, a most pleasant and cheerful place to stay, where a spacious dwelling, adjacent to large, well-kept gardens, was the meeting place for a circle of intelligent, well-bred individuals.¹⁴⁷ The family had nu-

merous members, and there was never a lack of strangers who very much enjoyed these easy and agreeable circumstances.

In the Düsseldorf gallery¹⁴⁸ I could amply indulge my predilection for the Dutch school. There were whole large rooms filled with these hearty, robust pictures that gleam with nature's opulence, and although my understanding of them was not improved, at least my acquaintance was extended and my affection reinforced.

The lovely calm, ease, and stability that were the chief characteristics of this familial society soon became livelier in the eyes of this guest when he noticed that it was the center of a wide sphere of influence and took part in affairs beyond itself. The industry and affluence of neighboring towns and villages contributed not a little to our feeling of inner contentment. We visited Elberfeld and were delighted by the bustle of its various well-equipped factories. Here we found our Jung, called Stilling, again, who earlier had come to meet us in Coblenz, under the excellent guidance, as always, of his faith in God and loyalty to men. We saw him here in his sphere and were glad to see that he enjoyed the trust of his fellow townsmen, who, while intent on earthly gain, did not neglect heavenly treasures. This industrial region was a soothing sight because its profitability was the product of order and cleanliness. We passed some happy days in these contemplations.

Returning then to my friend Jacobi, I enjoyed the rapturous feeling of being joined to someone by way of the innermost self. We both had the highest hopes of accomplishing something together, and I implored him to give some sort of vigorous literary form to the ferment within him. This had been my means of ridding myself of so many perplexities, and I hoped it would appeal to him as well. He quickly and courageously adopted it, and how many good, beautiful, and inspiring works he has written! And so at last we parted, blissfully feeling that our partnership would last forever, and without the slightest premonition that our striving would be in two different directions, as was revealed only too clearly in the later course of our lives.

Whatever else I may have experienced while returning up the Rhine has quite faded from my memory, partly because in one's thoughts the second view of objects tends to merge with the first view of them, and also partly because I had become introspective and was trying to sort out my many impressions and ponder on what had affected me. One important result was that I was stimulated to become productive and was kept busy for some time. This is what I intend to speak of now.

Since my own disposition was all too free, and my life and actions completely pointless and planless, it could not escape me that Lavater and Basedow were using intellectual, indeed spiritual means to secular ends. I, who was wasting my time and talents to no purpose, soon

could not fail to be struck by the fact that both men, each in his own way, while busily teaching, instructing, and convincing, were keeping in reserve certain hidden goals which they were very intent on furthering. Lavater's methods were gentle and clever, Basedow's vehemement, outrageous, even awkward. But both of them believed so firmly in their favorite pursuits and undertakings, and in the excellence of their procedure, that one had to consider them honest men, and love and respect them. It could be said to Lavater's credit, especially, that he really did have higher goals, and if his actions were worldly-wise, he was entitled to believe that the end justified the means. As I observed the two of them, frankly giving them my opinion and listening to theirs in turn, the thought occurred to me that of course an excellent man who has something divine within him will want to propagate it outside of himself as well. Then, however, he encounters the vulgar world, and, to influence it, he must descend to its level. This severely compromises his high qualities, and eventually he loses them altogether. The celestial and eternal are lowered into the body of earthly aims and subjected to the fate of transitory things. I regarded the careers of both men from this point of view, and Lavater and Basedow seemed to me to merit pity as much as honor, for I believed I foresaw that they might find themselves compelled to sacrifice higher goals to lower ones. Since I pursued all such musings to extremes and looked out beyond my own narrow experience for similar cases in history, I evolved the plan of using the life of Mohammed, whom I had never been able to view as a deceiver, for giving a dramatic presentation of those paths which, as I had so vividly observed in reality, lead not to salvation but to ruin. Shortly beforehand, I had read and studied the life of the Oriental prophet with great interest, and thus was well prepared when the idea rose up in me. The form was fairly close to that dictated by the classical rules, toward which I was already leaning again, although I did make moderate use of the theater's newly found freedom to do as it likes with time and place. The play began with a hymn, which Mohammed sings in solitude under a starlit nocturnal sky. First he pays his respects to the innumerable stars as though they were so many gods; then the friendly planet Gad (our Jupiter) rises, and he directs his veneration exclusively to it, as the king of stars. Before long, the moon moves up and wins the eye and heart of this worshipper, who next is splendidly refreshed and invigorated by the rising sun, which calls forth new praises from him. But however agreeable this change may be, it is nevertheless disquieting, and his heart feels challenged to new efforts. It raises itself up to God, the single, eternal, limitless One, to whom all these splendid but limited entities owe their existence. I composed this hymn very lovingly, and although it has been lost, it could probably be reconstructed to serve as a cantata, which would appeal to a musician because

of the variety of expression. But, as was already my intention at that time, one would have to picture Mohammed as a caravan leader with his family and the whole tribe, and thus ample provision would be made for the alternation of voices and for mighty choruses.

After Mohammed himself is converted, he imparts his feelings and convictions to his family, and his wife and Ali follow him unconditionally. In the second act he himself tries, and Ali still more vigorously, to propagate this faith throughout the tribe. This results in agreement or resistance, depending on the different characters. Dissension begins, the conflict grows violent, and Mohammed must flee. In the third act he subdues his opponents, makes his religion a public matter, and cleanses the Kaaba of its idols. But not everything can be done with force, and so he must also resort to cunning. The earthly element in him grows and spreads, the divine retreats and loses its clarity. In the fourth act, Mohammed pursues his conquest, his teaching becomes more of a pretext than a goal, and all imaginable means must be employed, not excluding cruelties. He is poisoned by a woman whose husband's execution he has ordered. In the fifth act, he feels the effects of the poison. His great composure and his return to his former self, to his higher ideals, make him worthy of admiration. He purifies his doctrine, consolidates his realm, and dies.

Such was the plan of a work that I kept turning over in my mind for a long while, for it was my custom to think a project through before proceeding to carry it out. What I intended to portray was the whole extent to which a genius can influence people with his character and spirit, and how this brings both profit and loss to him. I had provisionally composed several songs that were to be inserted, but none has survived except the one entitled "Mohammed's Song," which is among my collected poems. In the play, Ali was supposed to sing this in his master's honor, at the pinnacle of their success, just before the poisoning brought about reverses. In addition, I remember the sense of some individual passages, but it would lead me too far afield to go into that here.

Book Fifteen

From all these many distractions, which usually gave rise to serious, and even religious meditations, I would return again and again to my noble friend Miss von Klettenberg, whose presence would calm, at least for the moment, my impetuous, wide-ranging fancies and enthusiasms. After my sister, she was the one to whom I preferred giving an account of my projects. Surely I should have noticed that her health was gradually failing, but I refused to acknowledge this, and was encouraged not to by the fact that her cheerfulness increased along with the illness. She liked to sit, neatly and cleanly dressed, in her armchair by the window, where she benevolently listened to the stories of my rambles, and to whatever I read aloud to her. Sometimes I would also draw sketches to help me along in describing the regions I had seen. One evening, as I was again recollecting various scenes, she and her surroundings were transfigured for me, as it were, by the light of the setting sun, and I could not refrain from mustering all my inadequate skill to draw a picture of her and the objects in her room. It would have been most charming if executed by an experienced painter like Kersting.¹⁴⁹ I sent it to a woman friend living elsewhere, and I attached a song as a supplement and commentary.

See within this magic mirror,
Like a dream, so dear and blessed,
'Neath the pinions of her Savior
Our sick friend now takes her rest.

Look, she's struggled her way over
From the waves of worldly strife,
See your picture there before her,
Next the God who gave His life.

Feel what I felt there, surrounded
By celestial atmosphere,
As in haste, with zeal unbounded,
I dashed off the drawing here.

If I pretended to be a foreigner, a stranger, even a heathen in these stanzas, as I did on some other occasions, she was not offended, instead she assured me that I was dearer to her than ever because I had used Christian terminology, in which I had never really succeeded before. Indeed, whenever I read mission reports aloud to her, which she was always very pleased to hear, I would customarily presume to

support the natives against the missionaries and call their former condition preferable to the later one. She always remained friendly and unruffled, and seemed not to have the slightest doubts about me and my salvation.

However, the reason I was gradually deviating more and more from her creed was that I had tried to embrace it with far too much earnestness and with passionate love. Since first coming into contact with the Moravian Brotherhood, I had felt a growing inclination toward this society gathered under Christ's victory banner. Every positive religion has its greatest appeal when it is in the process of development. That is why it is so pleasant to imagine oneself back in apostolic times, when everything still seems fresh and appeals directly to the spirit; and the Brotherhood had a magical quality in this respect, for they seemed to keep that early condition alive, nay, to immortalize it. They traced their origin back to the earliest times, and said their society had never died out, but had survived in the crude world just by sending out its inconspicuous tendrils. Under the protection of an excellent, pious man¹⁵⁰ one single bud had now taken root and was spreading out again over the whole world from these obscure and seemingly random beginnings. The most important point about this was that the religious and civil constitutions were inseparably combined, the teacher being seen simultaneously as a master, the father simultaneously as a judge. What is more, the godlike leader, who was unconditionally believed in religious matters, was also called upon to direct secular affairs, and his answer, based on the drawing of lots, was submissively accepted as decisive both for the administration as a whole and for every individual member. The lovely calmness they showed, at least on the surface, was most attractive, while on the other hand their missionary calling required all the energy a human being possesses. At the synod in Marienborn, to which I had been taken by Legation Councilor Moritz,¹⁵¹ the agent for Count von Isenburg, I met some excellent men who gained my full respect, and it would have rested only with them to make me theirs. I studied their history, their doctrine, its antecedents and development, so that I was able to give an account of these things and could converse about them with interested people. However, I could not but notice that the Brothers were no more willing to accept me as a Christian than Miss von Klettenberg was, a discovery which troubled me at first but ended by rather cooling off my enthusiasm. Yet for a long time I was unable to detect the real point of difference, fairly obvious though this was; but then it was brought home to me more by accident than as the result of research. Namely, what set me apart from the Brotherhood as well as from other worthy Christian souls was the very thing that has more than once brought schism into the church: Some would say that human nature has been so thoroughly corrupted

by original sin that one can probe it to its depths without finding the slightest trace of goodness, and that therefore the human being must absolutely renounce his own powers and rely completely on the workings of grace. The others would be equally willing to concede man's hereditary defects, but still wanted to grant nature its possession of a little inner cell, which, when fertilized by divine grace, could grow into a joyous tree of spiritual bliss. Without realizing it myself, I was profoundly committed to the latter conviction, although I had confessed my faith in the opposing one with tongue and pen. But I was only hazily aware of the real dilemma, and had never put it into words. However, I was once quite unexpectedly brought down to earth when, in a religious conversation, I quite frankly expressed this opinion of mine, thinking it to be very innocent, and then had to suffer a long sermon of rebuke on account of it. In refutation, it was claimed that this was true Pelagianism, and it was a particular misfortune for modern times to have this pernicious doctrine gaining ground again. I was astonished, nay, shocked at this. I went back into ecclesiastical history, examined the teachings and vicissitudes of Pelagius more closely, and now saw distinctly how these two incompatible opinions had ebbed and flowed through the centuries, and had been accepted and made an article of faith by people, in accordance with their natural inclination either to activeness or passivity.

The course of the past few years had been such that I was constantly challenged to exercise my own powers, and I was attempting indefatigably, with a right good will, to achieve moral development. The world outside me demanded that these impulses be regulated and used for the good of others, and inside myself I was occupied with the assimilation of this great challenge. On all sides I was referred back to nature, which appeared before me in all its splendor. I had met so many honest and upright people who drudged along in their duties, for duty's sake, and I felt it was impossible to renounce them, nay, to renounce myself. I began to distinguish the chasm separating me from that Moravian doctrine, and therefore I had to forsake this company. Since I could not be robbed of my affection for the Holy Scriptures or for Christianity's founder and its early believers, I made up a version of it for my own private use and tried to give this a foundation and structure by means of diligent historical studies and careful examination of those people who had been inclined to the same views as I.

However, because everything I turned to with love would immediately begin assuming a poetic form, I seized on the singular idea of giving an epic treatment to the story of the Wandering Jew, which had early made an impression on me by way of the popular chapbooks. With this as a guide I proposed to depict, wherever fitting, the principal

events of religious and church history. And now I intend to relate how I gave form to this fable and what meaning I assigned to it.

In Jerusalem there was a cobbler whom legend gives the name Ahasuerus. My Dresden cobbler provided me with the basic traits for him. I equipped him very well with the wit and humor of a craftsman, of a Hans Sachs, and ennobled him by showing his inclination to Christ. Because his workshop was open to the street and he liked to converse with passersby, tease them, and, in Socratic fashion, awaken each one's individual interest, his neighbors and other folk were glad to tarry a while with him. Pharisees and Sadducees also stopped by for a word, and the Savior Himself, accompanied by His disciples, liked to linger there sometimes. Although the cobbler's mind was only on worldly matters, he still took a special liking to our Lord and chiefly expressed it by trying to convert this great man, whose mind he did not grasp, to his own way of thinking and acting. Therefore he urged Christ most earnestly to leave off contemplation, not to roam the countryside in the company of such idlers, and not to lure the people away from their work to go out to Him in the wilderness. An assembled crowd (the cobbler said) is always an agitated one, and nothing good would come of it.

For His part, the Lord tried to instruct him allegorically about His higher views and purposes, but these were lost on the uncouth man. Consequently, when Christ became more and more significant, indeed a public figure, the well-meaning craftsman spoke up ever more sharply and vehemently, protesting that unrest and rebellion would inevitably result and that Christ Himself would be compelled to step forward as a party chief, which could not possibly be His intention. When affairs took their well-known course, and Christ was captured and sentenced, then Ahasuerus grew still more violently excited, for Judas, who apparently had betrayed the Lord, entered the workshop in despair and with lamentations told how his deed had been unsuccessful. He said he had been firmly convinced, just like the shrewdest of the other disciples, that Christ would declare Himself as regent and head of the nation, and had wanted to use force to compel the Lord, whose hesitation had hitherto been insuperable, to action. For that reason he had provoked the priests to acts of violence that they too had heretofore not ventured. As far as the disciples were concerned, they were not unarmed either, and probably everything would have turned out all right if the Lord had not surrendered Himself and left them behind in the saddest condition. These tales by no means awoke sympathy in Ahasuerus; instead, he made the poor ex-apostle's situation still bitterer, so that the latter had no choice but to rush off and hang himself.

When Jesus was led past the cobbler's workshop to His death, it

was there that the famous scene ensued when the sufferer succumbed to the weight of the cross, and Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry it further. At this point Ahasuerus stepped forward in the manner of those hard-headed people who feel no pity when they see someone suffer as a result of his own foolishness, nay, whose sense of justice even importunately impels them to make matters worse with their reproaches. He stepped outside and repeated all his earlier warnings, transforming them now into vehement accusations, which he thought were justified by his affection for the sufferer. The latter did not answer, but at that moment the loving Veronica covered the Savior's face with a cloth, and when she removed it and held it aloft, Ahasuerus beheld the countenance of our Lord on it, not as it was in the present sufferer, but as in one transfigured and radiating heavenly life. Dazzled by this apparition he turned his eyes away and heard the words, "You will roam upon the earth until you behold me again in this form." Only after some time did the stricken cobbler regain his senses, and then he found Jerusalem's streets deserted, for all had thronged to the place of execution. Uneasiness and longing drove him out, and he began his wanderings.

Perhaps I shall speak at another time about these wanderings and the conclusion of the poem—which does not mean that I finished it. The beginning, end, and some isolated passages were written, but I could neither muster my thoughts nor enough time to do the research necessary for giving it the desired substance. Its few pages were the more easily left lying since I was entering on the period which was bound to set in after I wrote *Werther* and saw the effects of this book.

The common fate of human beings, which all of us have to bear, cannot but fall most heavily on the shoulders of him whose intellectual powers develop earliest and most broadly. We may prosper under the protection of parents and relatives, we may lean on brothers and sisters and friends, we may be amused by acquaintances and made happy by persons we love, but in the final analysis a human being is always thrust back on himself. Apparently even the Deity has positioned itself to man in such a way that it cannot always respond to his respect, trust, and love, or at least not precisely at the urgent moment. When quite young I had often discovered that in the greatest emergencies what we hear is "Physician, help yourself!" And how frequently I had been compelled to say, with a painful sigh, "I have trodden the wine-press alone."¹⁵² While I was thus looking around for something to confirm my independence, I found that the securest basis for it was my productive talent. For several years this had not abandoned me for a moment; what I perceived while awake in the daytime, often developed into orderly dreams at night, and when I opened my eyes I would see either an amazing new whole or a part for something already begun. I

usually wrote early in the morning; but in the evening too, indeed late at night, when my spirits were braced by wine and sociability, anything could be demanded of me. All that was needed was an occasion with character, and then I was ready and able. As I reflected on this natural gift and saw that it was my very own possession, which no outside influence could either facilitate or hinder, I was glad to make it the philosophical basis for my whole existence. The idea transformed itself into an image: I was struck by the old mythological figure of Prometheus, who was separated from the gods and populated the world for himself out of his own workshop. I was keenly aware that one had to isolate oneself in order to produce something of significance. Those works of mine that had received so much praise were the children of solitude. Having a quite broad relation to the world now, I was not without the ability or desire to invent, but execution was stalled because actually I had no style in either prose or verse, but had to start all over again with every new work, fumbling for a way to treat its subject matter. Since it was necessary to decline, indeed to shut out, anyone's help with this, I imitated Prometheus by separating myself from the gods, and this was all the more natural for me since my character and turn of mind were such that one sentiment would always crowd out and obliterate the rest.

The myth of Prometheus came to life in me. I tailored the old titanic garments to my size, and without further reflection began to write a play portraying the difficulties Prometheus experienced with Zeus and the new Olympian gods when he formed human beings on his own initiative, brought them to life with Minerva's help, and founded a third dynasty. And truly, the gods who were now ruling had every cause to complain, because they could be viewed as entities illegitimately inserted between the Titans and mankind. Set as a monologue into this singular composition is that poem which has won a significant place in German literature because it prompted Lessing to declare his views to Jacobi on some important points of philosophy and sentiment.¹⁵³ It served as the tinder for an explosion which revealed and brought to discussion the most secret concerns of worthy men, concerns which, unknown even to them, slumbered in an otherwise very enlightened society. The fissure was opened so violently that because of it, and some contingent occurrences, we lost one of our worthiest men, Mendelssohn.¹⁵⁴

Although, as actually happened, one can attach philosophical, indeed religious considerations to this subject matter, it really belongs to the realm of poetry. The Titans are the foil to polytheism, just as the devil can be viewed as the foil to monotheism. But neither the latter nor the one God to whom he stands in contrast is a poetic figure. Milton's Satan, gallantly as he is portrayed, remains in a disadvantageously sub-

altern position as he attempts to destroy the splendid creation of a superior Being. Prometheus, on the other hand, has the advantage of being able to create and form in defiance of higher beings. Also, it is a beautiful thought, one appropriate for poetry, to have human beings created, not by the supreme ruler of the world, but by a lesser figure who, however, is sufficiently worthy and important to do this because he is a scion of the oldest dynasty. And, in general, Greek mythology offers us an inexhaustible wealth of human and divine symbols.

However, this trend toward the titanic-gigantic and earth-shaking yielded no material for my kind of poetry. I felt it more suitable to portray that type of peaceful, formative, generally passive resistance which acknowledges the superior authority but desires equality with it. Yet the bolder members of that race—Tantalus, Ixion, and Sisyphus—were also sacred to me. Evidently they had not behaved subordinately enough when they were accepted into the company of the gods; as obstreperous guests they earned the anger of their hospitable patron and incurred a sad exile. I pitied them, and even the ancients recognized their condition as truly tragic. Since I showed them as members of a vast opposition in the background of my *Iphigenia*, surely I owe them part of the success this play has had the good fortune to enjoy.

At that time, writing poetry and making pictures were inseparable activities for me. I drew the portraits of my friends in profile on gray paper with white and black chalk. When I dictated or someone read aloud to me, I would sketch the poses assumed by the persons writing or reading, along with the surroundings. The resemblances were undeniable, and my drawings were well received. Dilettantes always have this advantage, because they give away their works free of charge. Nevertheless, I felt the inadequacies of my representations and turned back to what I had a better command of, namely language and meter. Many of my poems give evidence of how briskly, gladly, and quickly I went to work on them. They enthusiastically proclaimed the art in nature and the nature in art, and at the moment of their creation always gave new spirit to me and my friends.

Once during this period, when I was thus occupied and sitting alone in my room (with controlled light so that it at least looked like an artist's studio, and with walls hung and tacked full of half-finished works that gave the impression of great industry), a slim, handsome man stepped in, and at first, in the semi-darkness, I took him to be Fritz Jacobi. However, I soon recognized my error and greeted him as one does a stranger. There was an unmistakable hint of military bearing in his open, decorous manner. He told me his name was von Knebel,¹⁵⁵ and from his brief introductory statements I gathered that when he had been in the Prussian service he had sojourned for a rather long time in Berlin

and Potsdam, where he had established good, active relations with the resident literary personages and with German literature in general. He had associated primarily with Ramler and had adopted the latter's manner of reciting poems. He was also thoroughly acquainted with the writings of Götz,¹⁵⁶ who at that time was little known to Germans. He had arranged for this poet's *Isle of Maidens* to be printed in Potsdam and even for a copy of it to come into the king's hands. The king is said to have commented favorably on it.

Hardly had we discussed these general German literary subjects when I made the pleasant discovery that he at present held a position in Weimar and was designated to be the companion of Prince Constantine. I had already heard some favorable things about the situation there, for many strangers came to our house from Weimar. They had witnessed how Duchess Amalia¹⁵⁷ called the most excellent men to educate her princely sons, how the University of Jena had contributed its share toward this fine goal through its notable professors, and how this sovereign lady not only protected the arts but was herself an enthusiastic and expert practitioner. It was also said that Wieland enjoyed her special favor, and of course *The German Mercury*,¹⁵⁸ which gathered together the works of so many learned writers living elsewhere, contributed in no small degree to the reputation of the town where it was published. One of the best German theaters was established there and was famous both for its actors and for the authors who wrote for it. These fine institutions and arrangements, however, had apparently been destroyed by the terrible fire at the castle, which had taken place in May of the same year, and they were threatened with a long stagnation. But confidence in the hereditary prince¹⁵⁹ was so great that everyone not only felt convinced this damage would be repaired but that, in spite of it, every other hope would be abundantly fulfilled. I inquired about these persons and these matters just as though we were old acquaintances and expressed the wish to learn more about the situation there. The stranger replied in a friendly way that nothing could be easier, for the hereditary prince and his noble brother, Prince Constantine, had only just arrived in Frankfurt and wanted to meet and converse with me. I immediately indicated the greatest willingness to pay my respects to them, and my new friend answered that I should not waste any time doing so, because their sojourn would not be a very long one. I had to make myself ready for this, and so I took him to see my parents, who were very surprised by his arrival and his message and had quite a pleasant conversation with him. Thereupon I hurried with him to the young princes, who received me very unreservedly and amicably; and their supervisor, Count Götz,¹⁶⁰ also seemed not displeased to see me. While we did not lack for literary conversation, still it was chance that opened the best way for this soon to become significant and productive.

That is to say, Möser's *Patriotic Fantasies*, or rather, the first volume of them, were lying on the table, freshly bound and with uncut pages. Since I knew them well, and the others knew them but little, I had the advantage of being able to render a detailed account of them, and this supplied me with the most appropriate opening to converse with a young prince who had the best will and a firm determination to use his position to decidedly good effect. Möser's presentation, both in regard to contents and meaning, cannot but be highly interesting to every German. Whereas the German empire was usually reproached for lack of unity, anarchy, and impotence, to Möser's way of thinking this multitude of little states was a most desirable means of disseminating culture according to the individual requirements of a great variety of provinces, each with a different situation and constitution of parts. Möser, commencing with the town and bishopric of Osnabrück and then proceeding to the whole district of Westphalia, was able to describe their relation to the whole empire; and in the process of judging the situation he connected the past with the present, and showed how the latter developed from the former. By this means he very clearly set forth whether a change was laudable or blameworthy. Accordingly, any administrator of a state, in his own locality, had only to proceed in the same manner in order to acquaint himself very well with the make-up of his district, as well as with the latter's connections to its neighbors and the whole empire, and to assess both the present and the future.

This prompted discussion of many things pertaining to the differences between the upper and lower Saxon states: how, from the earliest times, not only their natural products but also their manners, laws, and customs had developed along individual lines and had been turned now in this direction, now in that, according to their form of government and their religion. We tried to define these differences more precisely, and here it became evident how great an advantage it is to have a good model before one, which, if one observes the underlying method rather than the particulars, can be applied to the most diverse cases and for that very reason be most helpful in the formation of judgments.

These conversations were continued at table, and they inspired a better impression of me than I perhaps deserved. For instead of discussing the kind of works I myself could produce and of demanding their undivided attention for the drama and the novel, I appeared, with my Möser, to prefer those authors whose talent emerged from active life and directly returned immediate profit to it, whereas genuinely poetic works, which hover beyond the moral and the physical, can only be of use in a roundabout way and, as it were, by coincidence. These conversations had a similar quality to the fairy tales in the *Arabian Nights*: one significant topic would crowd upon and over another, while many a theme was broached without the possibility of its being pursued.

And so, since the sojourn of the young lords in Frankfurt had to be brief, they exacted my promise to follow them to Mainz and spend a few days there. I was heartily glad to comply and hurried home to impart this delightful news to my parents.

However, it did not meet with my father's approval at all. His sentiments were those of an imperial free citizen, and therefore he always kept his distance from sovereigns. Although he was in contact with the official representatives of nearby princes and lords, he had no personal relationships whatever with the latter. Indeed, the courts were among the subjects he liked to joke about, but he also welcomed contrary views, providing that they were, in his opinion, expressed cleverly and wittily. We had not disputed his "Procul a Jove, procul a fulmine"¹⁶¹ except to remark that in the case of lightning it was as much a question of whence as of whither, whereupon he dragged out the old saying that it is not advisable to sup at one table with great lords. We replied that it is still less so to dine from one *plate* with greedy people. He did not deny this, but quickly produced another rhymed proverb which was meant to discomfit us. Sayings and rhymed proverbs proceed from the folk, which still wants to talk even if it has to obey, whereas those in authority take their satisfaction from deeds. Furthermore, sixteenth-century poetry is pithily didactic almost throughout. Hence there is no lack of seriously meant jests in our language, which have been employed by inferiors against their superiors. But we younger men now aimed them downwards, for we imagined great things of ourselves, and chose to take sides with the great lords. I insert a few examples of these pro and contra statements.

A.

Years at court, years in hell!

B.

There many a fellow warms himself well!

A.

Independence, that's what I savor;
No one needs to grant me his favor.

B.

Is favor the disgrace you've clept it?
If you would give it, you must accept it.

A.

Why are the courtiers always twitching?
They dare not scratch where it is itching.

B.

When the speaker addresses a throng,
He feels no itch, but scratches long.

A.

He who the path of servitude chooses
Half of his life immediately loses;
Let him consider, though high his level,
The other half, too, soon goes to the devil.

B.

He who accommodates to princes
Today or tomorrow success evinces.
He who accommodates to rabble,
Finds his whole year was execrable.

A.

If your wheatfield at court stands high,
Remember, it's about to die;
And if you think you have it well garnered,
That's just when they have you cornered.

B.

The wheat that prospers can be brought in,
That is what the custom's always been;
And should a hailstorm the harvest ruin,
Next year the soil will bear a new one.

A.

He who freedom highly rates,
Let him shut his cottage gates,
With wife and children pass his hours,
Content himself with simple wine,
And think a frugal meal quite fine,
And that's a life that nothing sours.

B.

You want escape from those who rule?
So tell me where you'll flee, you fool?
Oh, don't think you can change your life!

For you'll be ruled by your own wife,
And she's ruled by her loutish son—
Domestic slavery has begun.

Just now, as I was gathering the above rhymes together from old keepsake albums, more of these merry exercises fell into my hands, ones in which we amplified old German maxims and then juxtaposed them to other little sayings that experience proves to be equally true. A selection of them may someday serve as an epilogue to the puppet plays and prompt some cheerful thought.

In spite of all these rejoinders, however, my father was not to be swayed in his ideas. He customarily kept his strongest argument in reserve for the end of the conversation, and this was a detailed portrayal of Voltaire's adventure with Frederick II: how the exaggerated favor, the familiarity, the reciprocal compliments suddenly ceased and disappeared, and then we were witnesses to the spectacle when that extraordinary author and poet was arrested¹⁶² by the Frankfurt town militia, acting under the orders of Burgomaster von Fichard, as requisitioned by Resident Ambassador Freitag, and was kept prisoner for some time in the Rose Hotel on the Row. Of course, we could have made some objections at this point, for instance, that Voltaire himself had not been without blame; but we always admitted defeat, out of filial piety.

Allusion was made to this and similar matters on this occasion also, and therefore I hardly knew how I should act. He gave me blunt warning, asserting that the invitation was only a means for enticing me into a trap, so as to take revenge on me for the mischief I had done¹⁶³ to their favorite, Wieland. As convinced as I was of the opposite, since I saw all too plainly that my worthy father's alarm was due to the hypochondriacal visions which inflamed his long-held opinions, I did not wish to go directly contrary to his convictions and yet could not find any pretext under which I might retract my promise without appearing rude and ungrateful. Unfortunately our friend Miss von Klettenberg, to whom we were accustomed to turn in such cases, was sick in bed. In her and my mother I had two excellent mentors, whom I never called anything but "Word" and "Deed." Whenever the former cast her serene, nay, blessed glance on earthly things, then she easily disentangled the perplexities afflicting us other earthlings, and she generally was able to indicate the right path, for the very reason that she looked down into the labyrinth from above and was not caught in it herself. Once the decision was made, however, one could rely on my mother's energy and her readiness to help. Just as contemplation aided the first woman, faith aided the second, and because she maintained her cheerfulness at all times, she was never at a loss for means to achieve whatever was

planned or desired. In the present case I dispatched her to our sick friend for the latter's recommendation, and since this turned out in my favor, I next besought her to secure my father's approval. In the end he yielded, although unwillingly and skeptically.

So I arrived at Mainz at the designated hour, in some very cold weather, and, in keeping with the invitation, was received very amicably by the young lords and their companions. They remembered the conversations held in Frankfurt and those we had started were continued. When the subject turned to the latest German literature and its audaciousness, a natural result was that my notorious play, *Gods, Heroes, and Wieland*, also came under discussion, and I was pleased to note right at the beginning how cheerfully and merrily they viewed the work. But I was required to tell what circumstances actually produced this farce, and so I could not avoid confessing above all that we were genuine upper-Rhenish fellows, who knew no bounds when it came to expressing either affection or aversion. Our veneration of Shakespeare amounted to adoration. Wieland, on the other hand, with his decided tendency toward spoiling the interest and stifling the enthusiasm of both himself and his readers, had criticized quite a few things about the great author in the notes to his translation, and truly in a way that extremely vexed us and in our eyes detracted from the merit of this work. We saw Wieland, whom we venerated highly as a poet, and who had brought us much profit as a translator, now in the role of a peevish, one-sided, unjust critic. In addition, he declared himself hostile to our idols, the Greeks, and that aggravated our ill will toward him. It is sufficiently well known that the Greek gods and heroes are not famed for moral qualities, but for transfigured physical ones, which is why they are such splendid figures for the artist. Wieland in his *Alceste* had cast his heroes and demigods in modern form, which would have been quite acceptable, since everyone is at liberty to revamp poetic traditions to suit his own purposes and disposition. But in the letters on this opera that he published in the *Mercury* he seemed to us to have advocated this treatment in too partisan a manner, and to have irresponsibly maligned the excellent ancients and their elevated style by absolutely refusing to acknowledge the healthy, robust nature underlying those productions. Hardly had we finished our passionate discussions of these complaints in our little society when, on a Sunday afternoon, I was seized by my usual mania for dramatizing everything and, in *one* sitting, with a bottle of good Burgundy beside me, wrote down the whole play as it now stands. No sooner was it read aloud to my comrades who were present, and received by them with great jubilation, than I sent the manuscript to Lenz in Strassburg, who likewise seemed enraptured by it and stated that it must be printed at once. After some writing back and forth, I agreed to this, and he hurriedly gave it to a Strassburg

press. Only long afterwards did I discover that this had been one of Lenz's first steps in an effort to injure me and put me in bad repute with the public. At that time, however, I neither sensed nor suspected anything of the kind.

And so I related to my new patrons, in all naiveté, and as well as I myself knew it, the innocent origin of this play; and in order to convince them fully that no personal attack or any other intention was involved, I also informed them about our merry and saucy habit of teasing and mocking each other within the group. At this I saw their spirits quite recovered, and we were almost admired for being so greatly afraid that anyone might want to rest on his laurels. They compared a society like ours to those freebooters who feared they would be enervated by any moment of repose, which is why their leader, in the absence of enemies and chances to rob, would fire off a pistol under their banqueting table, so that even in peacetime they would feel pain and wounds. After much talking back and forth on this subject it was finally suggested I write Wieland a friendly letter, and I gladly seized the opportunity to do so, since he had already expressed himself very liberally concerning this youthful prank in the *Mercury*, and had acted intelligently to end the affair, as he usually did with literary feuds.

The few days of my sojourn in Mainz passed very pleasantly. When my new patrons were kept away from their lodgings by visits and banquets, I would stay behind with their attendants, drawing portraits of some of them, and I also went ice-skating, for which the frozen moat of the fortress offered an excellent opportunity. Glowing with the memory of my good experiences, I returned home, and my first thought upon entering was to relieve my excitement by telling all about them. However, I saw nothing but troubled faces, and it was not long before I discovered that our friend Miss Klettenberg had departed from us. I was very much taken aback by this news, because it was just in my present situation that I needed her more than ever. They calmed me by reporting that a pious death had been joined to her blessed life and that she had maintained unshakable serenity in her faith to the end. And there was something else that prevented me from talking freely: instead of rejoicing in the happy outcome of the little adventure, my father persisted in his views and stated that all this was simply pretense on their part and they were perhaps planning to do me some worse injury later on. Therefore I was obliged to go to my younger friends with my story, and truly they were eager to hear every detail of the affair. But here again, their affection and good will led to very unpleasant results for me, for shortly afterwards there appeared a pamphlet, likewise in dramatic form, entitled *Prometheus and His Reviewers*. Its author had carried through the droll notion of inserting, not personal names between the speeches, but little woodcut figures, and of using all sorts

of satirical pictures to designate those critics who had publicly given their opinion about my works and anything associated with them. Here was the *Altona Courier* blowing a horn, but without a head; here a bear was growling, there a goose was gabbling; Mercury was not omitted either, and many a wild and tame creature was trying to distract the maker in his workshop. He, however, took no particular notice and zealously continued his toil, meanwhile speaking freely about his intentions. This waggish piece, erupting so unexpectedly, shocked me very much because its style and tone showed obviously that it was by someone in our group; indeed the work could have been considered my own. The most unpleasant part for me, however, was that Prometheus divulged some things in reference to my sojourn in Mainz, and what was said there, which actually no one but me was supposed to know. This proved to me that the author was a member of my most intimate circle, who had heard my detailed account of those events and circumstances. We all looked at each other, and everybody suspected everybody else, while the unknown author was a good dissembler. I inveighed against him vehemently because, after having been received so favorably and entertained so specially, and after having written a friendly letter to Wieland, it was extremely vexing to me to see further unpleasantness and new cause for distrust. My uncertainty, however, was not of long duration, for as I walked up and down in my room reading the booklet aloud to myself, I clearly heard Wagner's voice in those ideas and turns of phrase, and that, indeed, is who it was. When I leapt downstairs to tell my mother about my discovery, she confessed to me that she knew it already. The author had been worried about the poor success of what seemed to him such a good and laudable intention, had revealed his secret to her, and had pleaded for her intercession. He did not want to suffer the consequences of the threat I had uttered not to associate anymore with the author because he had abused my trust. It was very fortunate for him that I had made the discovery myself and was in a conciliatory mood thanks to the complacency that always results from having perceived the truth on one's own. I forgave the blunder that had given me such an opportunity to demonstrate my sleuthing ability. At the same time, my public was not so easily convinced that Wagner was the author and that I did not have a hand in it. They did not credit him with so much versatility, for they failed to consider that he might be able to apprehend and take note of all the jests and discussions brought up over a period of time in a witty company, and portray them in a well-known style, without necessarily possessing a first-rate talent. And so I did not have only my own follies to atone for, but also very often, then and later, the frivolity and rashness of my friends.

Having been reminded of them by several coincidental circumstances,

I want to mention a few more significant men who traveled through at various times and either stayed at our house or were amicably received there. It is appropriate for Klopstock to head the list again. I had already exchanged several letters with him before he indicated to me that he had been invited to go to live in Karlsruhe. He would arrive at a designated time in Friedberg and wanted me to call for him there. I did not fail to be present at the right hour, but by chance he had been delayed en route, and after waiting in vain for several days, I returned home. Only after some time did he arrive in Frankfurt, excuse himself for his non-appearance, and express his pleasure at my willingness to meet him. He was small of stature, but well formed. His demeanor was grave and measured, without being stiff, and his conversation precise and pleasant. On the whole, his presence had a statesmanlike quality. Such a man undertakes a difficult task: he must simultaneously maintain his own dignity and the dignity of a superior to whom he is accountable, he must promote his own advantage next to the much more important one of a sovereign, nay, of whole nations, and above all else he must, in the midst of this precarious situation, ingratiate himself with people. And thus Klopstock appeared to conduct himself as a man of merit and the representative of higher matters such as religion, morality, and liberty. He had acquired another peculiarity of important personages, namely that of avoiding the very subjects about which one would expect and prefer to converse. He was seldom heard to speak of poetic and literary matters. However, since he found that I and my friends were passionately fond of skating, he discussed this noble art with us in detail, for he had thought it through profoundly and had made a study of what was to be attempted or avoided. But before we could benefit from his kind instruction, we had to submit to being set right about the expression itself, which we mistook. That is to say, in good southern German dialect we spoke of "going sled-shoeing," which he absolutely refused to accept, saying that the word does not derive from "sled," which would refer to a sliding forward on little runners, but from "stride," inasmuch as one strides on these winged soles like the Homeric gods, over a sea changed into solid ground. Next he came to the instrument itself: he rejected high, concave blades, and on the contrary recommended the low, wide, flat-ground Frisian steels as the ones most serviceable for speed-skating. He was no friend of the fancy figures that skaters frequently execute. At his command I procured a pair of those flat skates with long tips and used them for many years, although with some inconvenience. He was also able to speak knowledgeably about horsemanship, including the training of horses, and he did so gladly. And thus he usually, and apparently on purpose, avoided conversing about his own profession, and spoke all the more freely about unrelated arts, which he pursued as an amateur.

I could say a great deal more about this and other peculiarities of the extraordinary man if persons who lived with him longer had not already sufficiently informed us; but there is one observation I cannot resist making, namely that people who have received extraordinary talents from nature but are placed by her into a narrow, or at least incommensurate, sphere of activity, usually lapse into odd forms of behavior and, because they cannot make any direct use of their gifts, try to show them off in extraordinary and curious ways.

Zimmermann¹⁶⁴ likewise was our guest for a while. This tall and strongly built man, by nature vehement and outspoken, nevertheless had his outward demeanor completely under control and in company seemed to be a skilled, urbane physician; only in his writings and the most intimate company did he give freest rein to his inwardly untamed character. His conversation was diverse and most instructive, and if one overlooked the fact that he was keenly conscious of his own personality and merits, no more desirable society than his could be found. Because I was never in the least offended by what is called vanity, and in turn permitted myself to be vain (that is, without compunction called attention to what I liked best about myself), I got along quite well with him, we exchanged words of approval and reproach, and since he proved to be thoroughly open and informative I learned a great deal from him in a short time.

But if I am to assess this man gratefully, thoroughly, and in a kindly way, then I should not even say that he was vain. We Germans all too often misuse the word "vain." It really has the additional connotation of "emptiness," and is the proper designation only for a person who does not conceal how much he delights in his nothingness and how content he is with a hollow existence. With Zimmermann the exact opposite was true, for he had great merits but no inner satisfaction. However, a person is in a bad way if he cannot take a quiet pleasure in his natural gifts and does not find his reward simply in exercising them, but instead waits and hopes that others will recognize his achievements and duly appreciate them. For it is all too common knowledge that people allocate their applause very sparingly, and are stinting in their praise, nay, transform it into blame if at all possible. Anyone who enters public life without being prepared to accept this can expect nothing but chagrin, for even if he does not overesteem what he produces, at least he will esteem it unconditionally, and the world gives us only conditional approval. And then, too, one must have a receptive attitude to praise and applause, as to any other pleasure. When this is applied to Zimmermann, it has to be admitted again: what a person does not already possess, he cannot receive.

Should this excuse not be accepted, how much less can we justify another defect in this remarkable man, since it was responsible not

only for marring but destroying the happiness of others! This was his behavior toward his children. A daughter who traveled with him was left behind with us while he looked about in the vicinity. She might have been about sixteen years old. Though slim and attractive of figure, she did not have many social graces. Her regular features would have been pleasant if they had registered any sign of interest, but she always looked as calm as a statue, rarely uttered a word, and was totally silent when her father was present. Hardly, however, had she been alone with my mother for a few days and been affected by the cheerful, loving presence of this sympathetic woman, when she threw herself at the latter's feet, poured out her heart, and tearfully begged to be allowed to stay. In the most passionate terms she declared herself ready to remain in our house as a maid, as a slave, for the rest of her life, if only she did not have to return to her father, whose severity and tyranny were unimaginable. She said his treatment had driven her brother mad, and that she had just managed to bear it this long because she thought all families were the same, or not much better; but since she had now experienced such loving, cheerful, tolerant treatment, her situation seemed a true hell to her. My mother was very moved as she informed me about this passionate outburst, indeed she went to such lengths in her pity as to hint broadly that she would be content to keep the girl in her house if I could make up my mind to marry her.—“If she were an orphan,” I replied, “it could be considered and negotiated, but God preserve me from a father-in-law who is such a father!” My mother continued to try hard to help the poor child, but this only made her still unhappier. Eventually an excuse was found to put her in a boarding school. However, she died young.

I would scarcely have mentioned this reprehensible trait in an otherwise meritorious man if there had not already been public discussion of it after his death, in connection with the wretched hypochondria that tormented him—and others—in his last hours. For his severity toward his children was also hypochondria, a partial insanity, a continuous act of moral murder, which, after sacrificing his children, he directed at last against himself. Let us keep in mind, however, that this man, as robust and in the prime of life as he appeared to be, was ill, and that this skilled physician, who had helped and was still helping so many sick persons, was himself suffering from an incurable bodily infirmity. Indeed, for all his outward esteem, fame, honor, rank, and wealth, this worthy man led a very sad life, and anyone who is willing to get more information about this from the documents available in print will not condemn, but pity him.

If I am now expected to give a more precise account of this notable man's influence on me, I shall have to give another general description of those times. We were living in what can be termed the epoch of

challenge, for people challenged themselves and others to do things that no human being had yet accomplished. That is to say, men with an outstanding capacity for thought and feeling had come to the realization that the best thing a person could wish for, and not even find hard to attain, was to get a direct, original view of nature and base his actions on this. Thus the watchword again became "experience," and everyone opened his eyes as wide as he could; but, in fact, physicians had the most reason for insisting on this, and also opportunity to look around for it. Here a great star, which could be accepted as the example of everything desirable, gleamed out at them from ancient times. The writings that have come down to us under the name of Hippocrates provided the model of how a man should look at the world and objectively communicate what he has seen. But no one reflected that we cannot see like the Greeks, and that we shall never write poetry, sculpt, or heal like them. Even were it granted that one could learn from them, still in the meantime infinitely much had been experienced, and not always so purely, for quite often opinion had molded the discoveries. These too had to be known, differentiated, and sifted—again, a tremendous challenge. Then, through personal investigation and action, one was to become acquainted independently with discovered nature, just as if it were being regarded and treated for the first time, and this was to be done in a strictly genuine and correct manner. But since learning is certainly never imaginable without polymathy and pedantry, and practice hardly imaginable without empiricism and charlatanry, a violent conflict broke out when it came to separating use from misuse and letting the kernel win out over the shell. In progressing toward action it was now seen that the shortest way out of the matter was to call on the help of genius, which would use its magical gifts to settle the strife and meet the challenge. Meanwhile reason also intervened, reducing everything to clear concepts and presenting them in logical form, so that every prejudice might be removed and all superstition destroyed. Because some extraordinary men like Boerhaave and Haller actually accomplished incredible things, it seemed justifiable to demand still more of their pupils and successors. The assertion was made that the path was open, whereas in all earthly matters one can rarely speak of a path. Just as the water forced apart by a ship closes up immediately behind it, so it is also natural for error, when thrust aside by excellent minds trying to make room for themselves, to close the gap again quickly.

But our good Zimmermann absolutely refused to understand this, and would not admit that the world really is filled with absurdity. Impatient to the point of fury, he lashed out at everything he saw, or felt, to be wrong. It was immaterial to him whether he was grappling with a sick-nurse or Paracelsus, with a urine-prophet or an alchemist: he

would continue flailing away at one just like the other, and when he had worked himself breathless he would be most astonished that all the heads of this hydra, which he thought he had ground underfoot, were briskly showing him their teeth again from countless throats.

Whoever reads his writings, especially his competent work, *Concerning Experience*,¹⁶⁵ will get a clearer insight into the matters I discussed with this excellent man. The effect on me was all the greater since he was twenty years older than I. As a renowned physician he was principally engaged in treating the upper classes, and in this connection we constantly discussed the ruination of our times by effeminacy and overindulgence. And so his medical discourse, like that of the philosophers and my literary friends, also thrust me back toward nature. I was quite unable to share his passionate mania for reform. Instead, after we parted, I withdrew very quickly again into my specific field, and tried to exert myself moderately in applying the gifts nature had bestowed on me. While cheerfully resisting things of which I disapproved, I wanted to carve out some space for myself, unperturbed about how far my efforts might reach or where they might take me.

Von Salis,¹⁶⁶ who established the large boarding school in Marschlins, also passed through and paid us a visit. He was a serious, intelligent man, who no doubt privately made some curious comments about the mad doings of our little company of "geniuses." The same impression was probably made on Sulzer, who stopped by on his journey to southern France. At any rate, that is what is hinted in a passage in his travel account where he mentions me.

These both pleasant and educational visits, however, were interspersed with some we would have preferred to refuse. Truly needy people and impudent adventurers turned to the trusting youth, supporting their urgent demands with real or ostensible relationships or hardship stories. They borrowed money from me and put me into the position of having to borrow money myself, with the result that I got into the most unpleasant difficulties with well-to-do and kindly friends. I began to wish these pests might be fed to the ravens, while my father felt himself to be in the situation of the sorcerer's apprentice, who wanted his house scrubbed clean but was horrified when an irresistible flood came pouring over sills and steps. For my excessive charity was gradually upsetting and delaying the measured plan of life which my father had set up for me, causing it to assume unexpected new forms from one day to the next. My stay at Regensburg and Vienna¹⁶⁷ was as good as given up, and now I was only supposed to pass through them on my way to Italy, so as to gain at least a general overview. On the other hand, some friends who disapproved of such a circuitous route to an active life were of the opinion that we should take advantage of this particularly favorable moment and consider a permanent ar-

rangement in my native town. Although I was excluded from the council, first on account of my grandfather and later my uncle, there were still some civil posts which I could claim and be temporarily ensconced in while awaiting the future. Many agencies offered sufficient work, and to be a prince's local representative was considered an honor. I listened to their arguments and was myself convinced that I was capable of doing these things; but I had not examined myself to see whether this manner of life and work, which demands that one find one's favorite diversion in purposeful activity, was suitable for me. And now these suggestions and plans were supplemented by an amorous interest that seemed definitely to demand domesticity and a hastening of my decision.

The aforementioned group of young men and women, which owed its adherence, if not its origin, to my sister, still remained intact after her marriage and departure, because its members were, after all, accustomed to each other and did not know a better way of spending one evening a week than in this circle of friends. That curious orator, who will be remembered from the sixth book, had also found his way back to us, wiser but more perverse after a series of vicissitudes, and again he played the role of legislator for our little state. In the wake of his earlier prank he had figured out something similar, namely that lots should be drawn on each of the days, not to designate sweethearts, as before, but actual married couples. We knew well enough (he said) how lovers behave; but we were ignorant of the proper social conduct of husband and wife and, considering our advanced years, needed to learn that above all. He laid down the general rules, which are known to consist in acting as if one did not belong together: it was forbidden to sit side by side, or to talk to each other very much, much less indulge in caresses. On the other hand, each was supposed not only to avoid everything that might arouse the other's suspicion or displeasure, nay, more: one could earn the highest praise by being obliging to one's wife in an unaffected manner.

Hereupon the lottery was summoned to make its decisions, there was laughter and jesting about a few grotesque pairings that it saw fit to create, and the general marriage comedy was begun in good humor, and resumed every week.

Now, strangely enough, it so happened that from the very beginning the same young woman was allotted me twice running, an excellent person of the very type one would like to imagine as one's wife. She had a lovely, well-proportioned figure, her face was pleasant, and there was an equanimity in her demeanor that bespoke health of body and mind. She was always just the same at all hours of every day. She was highly praised for her housekeeping. Not particularly talkative, she demonstrated good understanding and a natural cultural development

in her utterances. It was easy to show regard and friendliness to such a person. I had been used to doing so before, out of a general inclination, but now my customary good will was transformed into a social duty. When the lottery brought us together for the third time, however, our teasing legislator made the solemn declaration that Heaven had spoken, and from now on we could not be separated. We accepted this mutually and both of us accommodated ourselves so nicely to our public marital duties that we really could be looked upon as models. Since according to the general constitution all the pairs united for the evening had to address each other with the familiar "thou" for those few hours, after some weeks we grew so accustomed to this intimate form of address that even when we met beetween times the "thou" would spring naturally to our lips. Habit is a curious thing: gradually, nothing seemed more natural to us than our relationship. She grew ever dearer to me, and her attitude to me showed such lovely, calm trustfulness that on occasion, had a priest been present, we would not have hesitated to be wed on the spot.

It was required that something new be read aloud at each one of our social gatherings, and so one evening, as a very fresh novelty, I brought along the original version of Beaumarchais' memoir against Clavigo.¹⁶⁸ This received very great applause, and then followed the comments which this work invites. After there had been much discussion back and forth, my dear partner said, "If I were your sweetheart and not your wife, I would entreat you to convert this memoir into a drama, for I think it is quite suited for that."—"So that you may see, my dear," I answered, "that sweetheart and wife can also be united in *one* person, I promise to present the subject of this book next week in dramatic form, just as I have read these pages today." They were amazed at such a bold promise, and I wasted no time in fulfilling it, for what is called "invention" in such cases was instantaneous with me. And at once I was silent, while I took my titular spouse to her home. She asked me what was wrong.—"I am already thinking out the play," I replied. "and am in the midst of it. I want to show you that I am happy to do something for your sake." She squeezed my hand, and when, in exchange, I eagerly kissed her, she said, "You must not fall out of character! People say it is improper for married couples to be affectionate."—"Let them talk," I replied. "We shall do it our way."

Before I arrived home, to be sure by a very circuitous route, the play was fairly well worked out. However, to keep this from sounding altogether too boastful, I am willing to admit that the subject matter had struck me, already at the first and second reading, as being dramatic, indeed theatrical. But without such a stimulus, this play, like so many others, would have remained among the potential births. It is well enough known how I proceeded with it. Tired of those villains who

oppose a person of noble character and destroy him out of revenge, hatred, or petty ambition, in *Carlos* I wanted to show pure worldly wisdom acting with true friendship against passion, inclination, and outside pressure, and thus for once to motivate a tragedy in this manner. On the authority of our patriarch, Shakespeare, I did not hesitate for a moment to translate the main scene and the really theatrical presentation word for word. To make an end at last, I borrowed the conclusion of an English ballad, and so the play was finished even before the next Friday came around. The good effect I achieved by reading it aloud can easily be granted me. My sweetheart-spouse was not a little delighted, and it seemed as if this production, like an intellectual offspring, had made our relationship closer and firmer.

However, Mephistopheles-Merck here for the first time did me a great injury. For when I showed him the play, he replied, "In future I beg you not to write such rubbish. The others can do as well as that." And yet he was mistaken. Surely not everything has to go beyond all generally accepted notions. If, at that time, I had written a dozen plays of the same kind, which would have been easy for me with a little encouragement, perhaps three or four of them would still hold the stage. Any theater management that knows the value of its repertory can say what an advantage that would be.

Thanks to this and other witty jests, our curious marriage game became the talk, if not of the town, at least of our families and did not sound at all unpleasant to the ears of our girls' mothers. A chance happening like this was not distasteful to my mother either. Even earlier, she had looked favorably on the young woman with whom I had entered into such a strange relationship, apparently thinking her capable of becoming as good a daughter-in-law as a wife. She was uneasy about the casual uproar I had been indulging in for some time, and in fact she was the one most burdened by it. It was she who had to be the generous hostess for the guests who streamed in, without getting other recompense for this literary billeting than that her son was given the honor of banquets in return. Furthermore it was clear to her that this crowd of young people, all of them without means and gathered together not only for knowledge and poetry but also for a good time, would become burdensome and injurious to each other and, most certainly, at last to me, whose frivolous generosity and willingness to be a guarantor she was well aware of.

Consequently, when my father again brought up the long-planned Italian journey, she took it to be the surest means of severing all these connections at one time. But, so as to ward off new perils in the wide world, she intended first to consolidate the alliance already begun, and thus make a return to my homeland seem more desirable to me and finally resolve my future career. Whether I am only imputing this plan

to her, or whether she definitely worked it out, perhaps with our deceased friend, I would leave open to question. Suffice it to say, her actions seemed based on a deliberate intention. Sometimes I had to hear that our family circle had grown much too narrow since Cornelia's marriage, and it was felt that I needed a sister, my mother a helper, and my father a pupil—not that such talk was the end of it. It happened as though by chance that my parents, while out for a stroll, encountered the young woman, invited her into the garden, and had a rather long conversation with her. There were jests about this at our evening meal, and it was mentioned with a certain satisfaction that she had pleased my father very well, inasmuch as she possessed all the chief qualities that he, as a connoisseur, demanded in a young woman.

Next, on the second floor, this and that preparation was made, as though we were expecting guests. The linen supplies were inspected, and repairs were made on some previously neglected household effects. Then I once surprised my mother up in an attic room where she was studying the old cradles, among which stood out especially an extra-large one of walnut, inlaid with ivory and ebony, that once had rocked me. She seemed slightly displeased when I remarked to her that rocking-boxes like these were now completely out of fashion, and that children, their limbs unhampered, were displayed in a pretty little basket attached to a strap around the shoulder, like other small wares.

In a word, such harbingers of a reviving domesticity came rather frequently. And since I took quite a tolerant attitude toward them, peace of a kind not enjoyed there for a long time spread out over the house and its inhabitants in anticipation of a condition meant to last for life.

Part Four

Nemo contra deum nisi deus ipse.

SIXTEENTH BOOK.

WHAT people commonly say of misfortunes, — that they never come alone, — may with almost as much truth be said also of good fortune, and, indeed, of other circumstances which often cluster around us in a harmonious way, whether it be by a kind of fatality, or whether it be that man has the power of attracting to himself all mutually related things.

At any rate, my present experience showed me everything conspiring to produce an outward and an inward peace. The former came to me while I resolved patiently to await the result of what others were meditating and designing for me: the latter, however, I had to attain for myself by renewing former studies.

I had not thought of Spinoza for a long time, and now I was driven to him by an attack upon him. In our library I found a little book, the author of which railed violently against that original thinker, and, to go the more effectually to work, had inserted for a frontispiece a picture of Spinoza himself, with the inscription, "*Signum reprobationis in vultu gerens*," bearing on his face the stamp of reprobation. This there was no gainsaying, indeed, so long as one looked at the picture; for the engraving was wretchedly bad, a perfect caricature: so that I could not help thinking of those adversaries who, when they conceive a dislike to any one, first of all misrepresent him, and then assail the monster of their own creation.

This little book, however, made no impression upon

me : since generally I did not like controversial works, but preferred always to learn from the author himself how he did think, than to hear from another how he ought to have thought. Still, curiosity led me to the article "Spinoza" in Bayle's Dictionary, a work as valuable for its learning and acuteness as it is ridiculous and pernicious by its gossiping and scandal.

The article "Spinoza" excited in me displeasure and mistrust. In the first place, the philosopher is represented as an atheist, and his opinions as most abominable ; but, immediately afterward, it is confessed that he was a calmly reflecting man, devoted to his studies, a good citizen, a sympathising neighbour, and a peaceable individual. The writer seemed to me to have quite forgotten the words of the gospel, "*By their fruits ye shall know them ;*" for how could a life pleasing in the sight of God and man spring from corrupt principles ?

I well remembered what peace of mind and clearness of ideas came over me when I first turned over the posthumous works of that remarkable man. The effect itself was still quite distinct to my mind, though I could not recall the particulars : I therefore speedily had recourse again to the works to which I had owed so much, and again the same calm air breathed over me. I gave myself up to this reading, and thought, while I looked into myself, that I had never before so clearly seen through the world.

As on this subject there always has been, and still is even in these later times, so much controversy, I would not wish to be misunderstood ; and therefore I make here a few remarks upon these so much feared, nay, abhorred, views.

Our physical as well as our social life, manners, customs, worldly wisdom, philosophy, religion, and many an accidental event, all call upon us *to deny ourselves*. Much that is most inwardly peculiar to us we are not

allowed to develop; much that we need from without for the completion of our character is withheld; while, on the other hand, so much is forced upon us which is as alien to us as it is burdensome. We are robbed of all we have laboriously acquired for ourselves, or friendly circumstances have bestowed upon us; and, before we can see clearly what we are, we find ourselves compelled to part with our personality, piece by piece, till at last it is gone altogether. Indeed, the case is so universal, that it seems a law of society to despise a man who shows himself surly on that account. On the contrary, the bitterer the cup we have to drink, the more pleasant face we must put on, in order that composed lookers-on may not be offended by the least grimace.

To solve this painful problem, however, nature has endowed man with ample power, activity, and endurance. But especially is he aided therein by his volatility (*Leichtsinn*), a boon to man which nothing can take away. By means of it he is able to renounce the cherished object of the moment, provided the next present him something new to reach at; and thus he goes on unconsciously remodelling his whole life. We are continually putting one passion in the place of another: employments, inclinations, tastes, hobbies, — we try them all, and end by exclaiming, *All is vanity!* No one is shocked by this false and murmuring speech; nay, every one thinks, while he says it, that he is uttering a wise and indisputable maxim. A few men there are, and only a few, who anticipate this insupportable feeling, and avoid all calls to such partial resignation by one grand act of total self-renunciation.

Such men convince themselves of the Eternal, the Necessary, and of Immutable Law, and seek to form to themselves ideas which are incorruptible, nay, which observation of the Perishable does not shake, but rather confirms. But, since in this there is something super-

human, such persons are commonly esteemed *in-human* (monsters), without a God and without a World. People hardly know what sort of horns and claws to give them.

My confidence in Spinoza rested on the serene effect he wrought in me; and it only increased when I found my worthy mystics were accused of Spinozism, and learned that even Leibnitz himself could not escape the charge, — nay, that Boerhaave, being suspected of similar sentiments, had to abandon theology for medicine.

But let no one think that I would have subscribed to his writings, and assented to them, *verbatim et literatim*. For, that no one really understands another; that no one does attach to the same word the same idea which another does; that a dialogue, a book, excites in different persons different trains of thought, — this I had long seen all too plainly; and the reader will trust the assertion of the author of “Faust” and “Werther,” that, deeply experienced in such misunderstandings, he was never so presumptuous as to think that he understood perfectly a man, who, as the scholar of Descartes, raised himself, through mathematical and rabbinical studies, to the highest reach of thought, and whose name, even at this day, seems to mark the limit of all speculative efforts.

How much I appropriated from Spinoza would be seen distinctly enough, if the visit of the “Wandering Jew” to Spinoza, which I had devised as a worthy ingredient for that poem, existed in writing. But it pleased me so much in the conception, and I found so much delight in meditating on it in silence, that I never could bring myself to the point of writing it out. Thus the notion, which would have been well enough as a passing joke, became expanded until it lost its charm; and I banished it from my mind as something troublesome. The chief points, however, of what I

owed to my study of Spinoza, so far as they have remained indelibly impressed on my mind, and have exercised a great influence on the subsequent course of my life, I will now unfold as briefly and succinctly as possible.

Nature works according to such eternal, necessary, divine laws, that the Deity himself could alter nothing in them. In this belief, all men are unconsciously agreed. Think only how a natural phenomenon, which should intimate any degree of understanding, reason, or even of caprice, would instantly astonish and terrify us.

When in animals there is exhibited anything like reason, it is long before we can recover from our amazement; for, although they are so near to us, they nevertheless seem to be divided from us by an infinite gulf, and to belong altogether to the kingdom of necessity. It is therefore impossible to take it ill if some thinkers have pronounced the infinitely ingenious, but strictly limited, organisation of those creatures, to be thoroughly mechanical.

If we turn to plants, our position is still more strikingly confirmed. How unaccountable is the feeling which seizes an observer upon seeing the *Mimosa*, as soon as it is touched, fold together in pairs its downy leaves, and finally clap down its little stalk as if upon a joint (*Gewerbe*). Still higher rises that feeling, to which I will give no name, at the sight of the *Hedysarum Gyrans*, which, without any apparent outward occasion, moves up and down its little leaves, and seems to play with itself as with our thoughts. Let us imagine a *Banana* suddenly endowed with a similar capacity, so that of itself it could by turns let down and lift up again its huge leafy canopy: who would not, upon seeing it the first time, start back in terror? So rooted within us is the idea of our own superiority, that we absolutely refuse to concede to the

outward world any part or portion in it; nay, if we could, we would too often withhold such advantages from our fellows.

On the other hand, a similar horror seizes upon us, when we see a man unreasonably opposing universally recognised moral laws, or unwisely acting against the interest of himself and others. To get rid of the repugnance we feel on such occasions, we convert it at once into censure or detestation; and we seek, either in reality or in thought, to get free from such a man.

This contrariety between Reason and Necessity, which Spinoza threw out in so strong a light, I, strangely enough, applied to my own being; and what has been said is, properly speaking, only for the purpose of rendering intelligible what follows.

I had come to look upon my indwelling poetic talent altogether as Nature; the more so, as I had always been impelled to regard outward Nature as its proper object. The exercise of this poetic gift could indeed be excited and determined by circumstances; but its most joyful, its richest, action was spontaneous, — nay, even involuntary.

Through field and forest roaming,
My little songs still humming,
I spent the livelong day.

In my nightly vigils the same thing happened: I therefore often wished, like one of my predecessors, to get me a leathern jerkin made, and to accustom myself to write in the dark, so as to be able to fix down at once all such unpremeditated effusions. So frequently had it happened, that, after composing a little piece in my head, I could not recall it, that I would now hurry to the desk, and, at one standing, write off the poem from beginning to end; and, as I could not spare time to adjust my paper, however obliquely it might lie, the

lines often crossed it diagonally. In such a mood I liked best to get hold of a lead pencil, because I could write most readily with it; whereas the scratching and spluttering of the pen would sometimes wake me from my somnambular poetising, confuse me, and stifle a little conception in its birth. For the poems thus created I had a particular reverence; for I felt toward them somewhat as the hen does toward her chickens, which she sees hatched and chirping about her. My old whim of making known these things only by means of private readings, now returned to me: to exchange them for money seemed to me detestable.

And this suggests to me to mention in the present place a little incident, which, however, did not take place till some time after. When the demand for my works had increased, and a collected edition was much called for, these feelings held me back from preparing it myself: Himburg, however, took advantage of my hesitation; and I unexpectedly received one day several copies of my collected works in print. With cool audacity this unauthorised publisher even boasted of having done me a public service, and offered to send me, if I wished, some Berlin porcelain by way of compensation. His offer served to remind me of the law which compelled the Jews of Berlin, when they married, to purchase a certain quantity of porcelain, in order to keep up the sale of the Royal manufacture. The contempt which was shown for the shameless pirate led me to suppress the indignation which I could not but feel at such a robbery. I gave him no reply; and, while he was making himself very comfortable with my property, I revenged myself in silence with the following verses:

Records of the years once dreamed away,
 Long-fallen hairs, and flowers that show decay,
 Faded ribbons, veils so lightly wove,
 The mournful pledges of a vanished love;

Things that to the flames should long have gone, —
 Saucy Sosias snatches every one.
 Just as though he were the heir to claim
 Lawfully the poets' works and fame.
 And, to make the owner full amends,
 Paltry tea and coffee cups he sends!
 Take your china back, your gingerbread!
 For all Himburgs living I am dead.

This very Nature, however, which thus spontaneously brought forth so many longer and smaller works, was subject to long pauses; and for considerable periods I was unable, even when I most wished it, to produce anything, and consequently often suffered from *ennui*. The perception of such contrasts within me gave rise to the thought whether it would not be my wisest course to employ on the other hand, for my own and others' profit and advantage, the human, rational, and intellectual part of my being, and so as I already had done, and as I now felt myself more and more called upon to do, devote the intervals, when Nature ceased to influence me, to worldly occupations, and thus to leave no one of my faculties unused. This course, which seemed to be dictated by those general ideas before described, was so much in harmony with my character, and my position in life, that I resolved to adopt it, and by this means to check the wavering and hesitation to which I had hitherto been subject. Very pleasant was it to me to reflect, that thus, for actual service to my fellow men, I might demand a substantial reward; while, on the other hand, I might go on disinterestedly spending that lovely gift of nature as a sacred thing. By this consideration I guarded against the bitterness of feeling which might have arisen when circumstances should force upon the remark that precisely this talent, so courted and admired in Germany, was treated as altogether beyond the pale of the law and of justice. For not only were piracies considered per-

fectly allowable, and even comical, in Berlin, but the estimable Margrave of Baden, so praised for his administrative virtues, and the Emperor Joseph, who had justified so many hopes, lent their sanction, one to his Macklot, and the other to his honourable noble *Von Trattner*; and it was declared, that the rights, as well as the property, of genius, should be left at the absolute mercy of the trade.

One day, when we were complaining of this to a visitor from Baden, he told us the following story: Her ladyship the margravine, being a very active lady, had established a paper manufactory; but the paper was so bad that it was impossible to dispose of it. Thereupon Mr. Bookseller Macklot proposed, if he were permitted to print the German poets and prose writers, he would use this paper, and thus enhance its value. The proposal was adopted with avidity.

Of course we pronounced this malicious piece of scandal to be a mere fabrication, but found our pleasure in it notwithstanding. The name of Macklot became a byword at the time, and was applied by us to all mean transactions. And a volatile youth, often reduced to borrowing himself, while others' meanness was enriching itself through his talents, felt sufficiently compensated by a couple of good jokes.

Children and youths wander on in a sort of happy intoxication, which betrays itself especially in the fact, that the good innocent creatures are scarcely able to notice, and still less to understand, the ever-changing state of things around them. They regard the world as raw material which they must shape, as a treasure which they must take possession of. Everything they seem to think belongs to them, everything must be subservient to their will; indeed, on this account, the greater part lose themselves in a wild, uncontrollable temper. With the better part, however, this tendency unfolds itself into a moral enthusiasm, which

occasionally moves of its own accord after some actual or seeming good, but still oftener suffers itself to be prompted, led, and even misled.

Such was the case with the youth of whom we are at présent speaking; and, if he appeared rather strange to mankind, still he seemed welcome to many. At the very first meeting, you found in him a freedom from reserve, a cheerful open-heartedness in conversation, and in action the unpremeditated suggestions of the moment. Of the latter trait a story or two.

In the close-built Jews' Street (*Judengasse*), a violent conflagration had broken out. My universal benevolence, which prompted me to lend my active aid to all, led me to the spot, full dressed as I was. A passage had been broken through from All Saints' Street (*Allerheiligengasse*), and thither I repaired. I found a great number of men busied with carrying water, rushing forward with full buckets, and back again with empty ones. I soon saw, that, by forming a lane for passing up and down the buckets, the help we rendered might be doubled. I seized two full buckets, and remained standing, and called others to me: those who came on were relieved of their load, while those returning arranged themselves in a row on the other side. The arrangement was applauded; my address and personal sympathy found favour; and the lane, unbroken from its commencement to its burning goal, was soon completed. Scarcely, however, had the cheerfulness which this inspired called forth a joyous, I might even say a merry, humour in this living machine, all of whose parts worked well together, when wantonness began to appear, and was soon succeeded by a love of mischief. The wretched fugitives, dragging off their miserable substance upon their backs, if they once got within the lane, must pass on without stopping, and, if they ventured to halt for a moment's rest, were immediately assailed. Saucy boys would sprinkle them with

the water, and even add insult to misery. However, by means of gentle words and eloquent reproofs, prompted perhaps by a regard to my best clothes, which were in danger, I managed to put a stop to their rudeness.

Some of my friends had from curiosity approached, to gaze on the calamity, and seemed astonished to see their companion, in thin shoes and silk stockings, — for that was then the fashion, — engaged in this wet business. But few of them could I persuade to join us: the others laughed, and shook their heads. We stood our ground, however, a long while; for, if any were tired and went away, there were plenty ready to take their places. Many sightseers, too, came, merely for the sake of the spectacle; and so my innocent daring became universally known, and the strange disregard of etiquette became the town-talk of the day.

This readiness to do any action that a good-natured whim might prompt, which proceeded from a happy self-consciousness which men are apt to blame as vanity, made our friend to be talked of for other oddities.

A very inclement winter had completely covered the Main with ice, and converted it into a solid floor. The liveliest intercourse, both for business and pleasure, was kept up on the ice. Boundless skating-paths, and wide, smooth-frozen plains, swarmed with a moving multitude. I never failed to be there early in the morning, and once, being lightly clad, was well-nigh frozen by the time my mother arrived, who usually came at a later hour to visit the scene. She sat in the carriage, in her purple velvet and fur-trimmed cloak, which, held together on her breast by a strong golden cord and tassel, looked quite fine. "Give me your furs, dear mother!" I cried out on the instant, without a moment's thought: "I am terribly frozen." Nor did she stop to think, and so in a moment I was wrapped in her cloak. Reaching half-way below my knees

with its purple colour, sable border, and gold trimmings, it contrasted not badly with the brown fur cap I wore. Thus clad, I carelessly went on skating up and down; the crowd was so great that no especial notice was taken of my strange appearance; still it was not unobserved, for often afterward it was brought up, in jest or in earnest, among my other eccentricities.

Leaving these recollections of happy and spontaneous action, we will now resume the sober thread of our narrative.

A witty Frenchman has said, If a clever man has once attracted the attention of the public by any meritorious work, every one does his best to prevent his ever doing a similar thing again.

It is even so: something good and spirited is produced in the quiet seclusion of youth; applause is won, but independence is lost; the concentrated talent is pulled about and distracted, because people think that they may pluck off and appropriate to themselves a portion of the personality.

It was owing to this that I received a great many invitations, or, rather, not exactly invitations: a friend, an acquaintance, would propose, with even more than urgency, to introduce me here or there.

The *quasi* stranger, now described as a bear on account of his frequent surly refusals, and then again like Voltaire's Huron, or Cumberland's West Indian, as a child of nature in spite of many talents, excited curiosity; and in various families negotiations were set on foot to see him.

Among others, a friend one evening entreated me to go with him to a little concert to be given in the house of an eminent merchant of the Reformed persuasion. It was already late; but, as I loved to do everything on the spur of the moment, I went with him, decently dressed, as usual. We entered a cham-

ber on the ground-floor,—the ordinary but spacious sitting-room of the family. The company was numerous: a piano stood in the middle, at which the only daughter of the house sat down immediately, and played with considerable facility and grace. I stood at the lower end of the piano, that I might be near enough to observe her form and bearing: there was something childlike in her manner; the movements she was obliged to make in playing were unconstrained and easy.

After the sonata was finished, she stepped toward the end of the piano to meet me: we merely saluted, however, without further conversation; for a quartet had already commenced. At the close of it, I moved somewhat nearer, and uttered some civil compliment, telling her what pleasure it gave me that my first acquaintance with her should have also made me acquainted with her talent. She managed to make a very clever reply, and kept her position as I did mine. I saw that she observed me closely, and that I was really standing for a show; but I took it all in good part, since I had something graceful to look at in my turn. Meanwhile, we gazed at one another; and I will not deny that I was sensible of feeling an attractive power of the gentlest kind. The moving about of the company, and her performances, prevented any farther approach that evening. But I must confess that I was anything but displeased, when, on taking leave, the mother gave me to understand that they hoped soon to see me again; while the daughter seemed to join in the request with some friendliness of manner. I did not fail, at suitable intervals, to repeat my visit; since, on such occasions, I was sure of a cheerful and intellectual conversation, which seemed to prophesy no tie of passion.

In the meantime, the hospitality of our house once laid open caused many an inconvenience to my good

parents and myself. At any rate, it had not proved in any way beneficial to my steadfast desire to notice the Higher, to study it, to further it, and, if possible, to imitate it. Men, I saw, so far as they were good, were pious, and, so far as they were active, were unwise and oftentimes unapt. The former could not help me, and the latter only confused me. One remarkable case I have carefully written down.

In the beginning of the year 1775, Jung, afterward called Stilling, from the Lower Rhine, announced to us that he was coming to Frankfort, being invited as an oculist, to treat an important case: the news was welcome to my parents and myself, and we offered him quarters.

Herr von Lersner, a worthy man advanced in years, universally esteemed for his success in the education and training of princely children, and for his intelligent manners at court and on his travels, had been long afflicted with total blindness: his strong hope of obtaining some relief of his affliction was not entirely extinct. Now, for several years past, Jung, with skilful boldness and a steady hand, had, in the Lower Rhine, successfully couched for the cataract, and thus had gained a widespread reputation. The candour of his soul, his truthfulness of character, and genuine piety, gained him universal confidence: this extended up the river through the medium of various parties connected by business. Herr von Lersner and his friends, upon the advice of an intelligent physician, resolved to send for the successful oculist; although a Frankfort merchant, in whose case the cure had failed, earnestly endeavoured to dissuade them. But what was a single failure against so many successful cases! So Jung came, enticed by the hope of a handsome remuneration, which heretofore he had been accustomed to renounce; he came, to increase his reputation, full of confidence and in high spirits: and we

congratulated ourselves on the prospect of such an excellent and lively table-companion.

At last, after a preparatory course of medicine, the cataract upon both eyes was couched. Expectation was at its height. It was said that the patient saw the moment after the operation, until the bandage again shut out the light. But it was remarked that Jung was not cheerful, and that something weighed on his spirits; indeed, on further inquiry, he confessed to me that he was uneasy as to the result of the operation. Commonly, for I had witnessed several operations of the kind in Strasburg, nothing in the world seemed easier than such cases; and Stilling himself had operated successfully a hundred times. After piercing the insensible cornea, which gave no pain, the dull lens would, at the slightest pressure, spring forward of itself: the patient immediately discerned objects, and only had to wait with bandaged eyes, until the completed cure should allow him to use the precious organ at his own will and convenience. How many a poor man for whom Jung had procured this happiness, had invoked God's blessing and reward upon his benefactor, which was now to be realised by means of this wealthy patient!

Jung confessed to me that this time the operation had not gone off so easily and so successfully: the lens had not sprung forward; he had been obliged to draw it out, and indeed, as it had grown to the socket, to loosen it; and this he was not able to do without violence. He now reproached himself for having operated also on the other eye. But Lersner and his friends had firmly resolved to have both couched at the same time; and, when the emergency occurred, they did not immediately recover presence of mind enough to think what was best. Suffice it to say, the second lens also did not spontaneously spring forward, but had to be loosened and drawn out with difficulty.

How much pain our benevolent, good-natured, pious friend felt in this case, it is impossible to describe or to unfold: some general observations on his state of mind will not be out of place here.

To labour for his own moral culture is the simplest and most practicable thing which man can propose to himself; the impulse is inborn in him: while in social life both reason and love prompt or rather force him to do so.

Stilling could only live in a moral religious atmosphere of love; without sympathy, without hearty response, he could not exist; he demanded mutual attachment; where he was not known, he was silent; where he was only known, not loved, he was sad; accordingly he got on best with those well-disposed persons who can set themselves down for life in their assigned vocation, and go to work to perfect themselves in their narrow but peaceful sphere.

Such persons succeed pretty well in stifling vanity, in renouncing the pursuit of outward power, in acquiring a circumspect way of speaking, and in preserving a uniformly friendly manner toward companions and neighbours.

Frequently we may observe in this class traces of a certain form of mental character, modified by individual varieties: such persons, accidentally excited, attach great weight to the course of their experience; they consider everything a supernatural determination, in the conviction that God interferes immediately with the course of the world.

With all this there is associated a certain disposition to abide in his present state, and yet at the same time to allow themselves to be pushed or led on, which results from a certain indecision to act of themselves. The latter is increased by the miscarriage of the wisest plans, as well as by the accidental success brought about by the unforeseen concurrence of favourable occurrences.

Now, since a vigilant, manly character is much checked by this way of life, it is well worthy of reflection and inquiry, how men are most liable to fall into such a state.

The things sympathetic persons of this kind love most to talk of, are the so-called awakenings and conversions, to which we will not deny a certain psychological value. They are properly what we call in scientific and poetic matters, an "*aperçu*;" the perception of a great maxim, which is always a genius-like operation of the mind: we arrive at it by pure intuition, that is, by reflection, neither by learning nor tradition. In the cases before us, it is the perception of the moral power, which anchors in faith, and thus feels itself in proud security in the midst of the waves.

Such an *aperçu* gives the discoverer the greatest joy; because, in an original manner, it points to the infinite: it requires no length of time to work conviction; it leaps forth whole and complete in a moment: hence the quaint old French rhyme, —

"En peu d'heure
Dieu labeure."

Outward occasions often work violently in bringing about such conversions, and then people think they see in them signs and wonders.

Love and confidence bound me most heartily to Stilling: I had, moreover, exercised a good and happy influence on his life; and it was quite in accordance with his disposition, to treasure up in a tender, grateful heart the remembrance of all that had ever been done for him: but, in my existing frame of mind and pursuits, his society neither benefited nor cheered me. I was glad to let every one interpret as he pleased and work out the riddle of his days: but this way of ascribing to an immediate, divine influence, all the

good that after a rational manner occurs to us in our chanceful life, seemed to me too presumptuous; and the habit of regarding the painful consequences of the hasty acts and omissions of our own thoughtlessness or conceit, as a divine chastisement, did not at all suit me. I could, therefore, only listen to my good friend, but could not give him any very encouraging reply: still I readily suffered him, like so many others, to go his own way, and defended him since then, as well as before, when others, of too worldly a mind, did not hesitate to wound his gentle nature. Hence I never allowed to come to his ears a roguish remark made by a waggish man who once exclaimed quite seriously, "No! indeed, if I were as intimate with God as Jung is, I would never pray to the Most High for gold, but for wisdom and good counsel, that I might not make so many blunders which cost money, and draw after them wretched years of debt."

In truth, it was no time for such jests. Between hope and fear several more days passed away; with him the latter grew, the former waned, and, at last, vanished altogether: the eyes of the good patient man had become inflamed, and there remained no doubt that the operation had failed.

The state of mind to which our friend was reduced hereby, is not to be described: he was struggling against the deepest and worst kind of despair. For what was there now that he had not lost! In the first place, the warm thanks of one restored to sight, — the noblest reward which a physician can enjoy; then the confidence of others similarly needing help; then his worldly credit, while the interruption of his peculiar practice would reduce his family to a helpless state. In short, we played the mournful drama of Job through from beginning to end, since the faithful Jung took himself the part of the reproving friends. He chose to regard this calamity as

the punishment of his former faults ; it seemed to him, that, in taking his accidental discovery of an eye-cure as a divine call to that business, he had acted wickedly and profanely ; he reproached himself for not having thoroughly studied this highly important department, instead of lightly trusting his cures to good fortune ; what his enemies had said of him recurred again to his mind ; he began to doubt whether perhaps it was not all true ; and it pained him the more deeply when he found, that, in the course of his life, he had been guilty of that levity which is so dangerous to pious men, and also of presumption and vanity. In such moments he lost himself ; and, in whatever light we might endeavour to set the matter, we at last elicited from him only the rational and necessary conclusion, — that the ways of God are unsearchable.

My unceasing efforts to be cheerful would have been more checked by Jung's visit, if I had not, according to my usual habit, subjected his state of mind to an earnest friendly examination, and explained it after my own fashion. It vexed me not a little to see my good mother so poorly rewarded for her domestic care and painstaking ; though she did not herself perceive it, with her usual equanimity and ever bustling activity. I was most pained for my father. On my account he, with a good grace, had enlarged what hitherto had been a strictly close and private circle : and at table especially, where the presence of strangers attracted familiar friends and even passing visitors, he liked to indulge in a merry, even paradoxical, conversation, in which I put him in good humour, and drew from him many an approving smile, by all sorts of dialectic pugilism ; for I had an ungodly way of disputing everything, which, however, I pertinaciously kept up in every case so long only as he, who maintained the right, was not yet made perfectly ridiculous. During the last few weeks, however, this procedure was not to

be thought of; for many very happy and most cheering incidents, occasioned by some successful secondary cures on the part of our friend, who had been made so miserable by the failure of his principal attempt, did not affect him, much less did they give his gloomy mood another turn.

One incident in particular was most amusing. Among Jung's patients there was a blind old Jewish beggar, who had come from Isenburg to Frankfort, where, in the extremity of wretchedness, he scarcely found a shelter, scarcely the meanest food and attendance: nevertheless, his tough Oriental nature helped him through, and he was in raptures to find himself healed perfectly and without the least suffering. When asked if the operation pained him, he said, in his hyperbolical manner, "If I had a million eyes, I would let them all be operated upon, one after the other, for half a *Kopfstück*."¹ On his departure he acted quite as eccentrically in the *Fahrgasse* (or main thoroughfare): he thanked God, and, in good Old Testament style, praised the Lord, and the wondrous man whom he had sent. Shouting this, he walked slowly on through the long, busy street toward the bridge. Buyers and sellers ran out of the shops, surprised by this singular exhibition of pious enthusiasm, passionately venting itself before all the world; and he excited their sympathy to such a degree, that, without asking anything, he was amply furnished with gifts for his travelling expenses.

This lively incident, however, could hardly be mentioned in our circle; for though the poor wretch, with all his domestic misery, in his sandy home beyond the Main, could still be counted extremely happy, the man of wealth and dignity on this side of the river, for

¹ A coin, with the head of the sovereign stamped upon it, generally worth four and one-half good groschen. — TRANS.

whom we were most interested, had missed the priceless relief so confidently expected.

It was sickening, therefore, to our good Jung to receive the thousand guilders, which, being stipulated in any case, were honourably paid by the high-minded sufferer. This ready money was destined to liquidate, on his return, a portion of the debts which added their burden to other sad and unhappy circumstances.

And so he went off inconsolable; for he could not help thinking of his meeting with his careworn wife, the changed manner of her parents, who, as sureties for so many debts of this too confiding man, might, however well-wishing, consider they had made a great mistake in the choice of a partner for their daughter. In this and that house, from this and that window, he could already see the scornful and contemptuous looks of those who, even when he was prospering, had wished him no good; while the thought of a practice interrupted by his absence, and likely to be materially damaged by his failure, troubled him extremely.

And so we took our leave of him, not without all hope on our parts; for his strong nature, sustained by faith in supernatural aid, could not but inspire his friends with a quiet and moderate confidence.

SEVENTEENTH BOOK.

IN resuming the history of my relation to Lilli, I have to mention the many very pleasant hours I spent in her society, partly in the presence of her mother, partly alone with her. On the strength of my writings, people gave me credit for knowledge of the human heart, as it was then called: and in this view our conversations were morally interesting in every way.

But how could we talk of such inward matters without coming to mutual disclosures? It was not long before, in a quiet hour, Lilli told me the history of her youth. She had grown up in the enjoyment of all the advantages of society and worldly comforts. She described to me her brothers, her relations, and all her nearest connections; only her mother was kept in a respectful obscurity.

Little weaknesses, too, were thought of; and among them she could not deny, that she had often remarked in herself a certain gift of attracting others, with which, at the same time, was united a certain peculiarity of letting them go again. By prattling on, we thus came at last to the important point, that she had exercised this gift upon me too, but had been punished for it, since she had been attracted by me also.

These confessions flowed forth from so pure and childlike a nature, that by them she made me entirely her own.

We were now necessary to each other, we had grown into the habit of seeing each other; but how many a day, how many an evening till far into the

night, should I have had to deny myself her company, if I had not reconciled myself to seeing her in her own circles! This was a source of manifold pain to me.

My relation to her was that of a character to a character — I looked upon her as to a beautiful, amiable, highly accomplished daughter: it was like my earlier attachments, but was of a still higher kind. Of outward circumstances, however, of the interchange of social relations, I had never thought. An irresistible longing reigned in me; I could not be without her, nor she without me; but from the circle which surrounded her, and through the interference of its individual members, how many days were spoiled, how many hours wasted.

The history of pleasure-parties which ended in displeasure; a retarding brother, whom I was to accompany, who would, however, always be stopping to do some business or other, which, perhaps, somewhat maliciously, he was in no hurry to finish, and would thereby spoil the whole well-concerted plan for a meeting; and ever so much more of accident and disappointment, of impatience and privation, — all these little troubles, which, circumstantially set forth in a romance, would certainly find sympathising readers, I must here omit. However, to bring this merely contemplative account nearer to a living experience to a youthful sympathy, I may insert some songs, which are indeed well known, but are perhaps especially impressive in this place.

Heart, my heart, oh, what hath changed thee?

What doth weigh on thee so sore?

What hath thus from me estranged thee,

That I know thee now no more?

Gone is all which once seemed dearest,

Gone the care which once was nearest,

Gone thy toils and tranquil bliss:

Ah! how couldst thou come to this?

Does that bloom so fresh and youthful,
 That divine and lovely form,
 That sweet look, so good and truthful,
 Bind thee with unbounded charm?
 If I swear no more to see her,
 If I man myself to flee her,
 Soon I find my efforts vain :
 Back to her I'm led again.

She with magic thread has bound me,
 That defies my strength or skill :
 She has drawn a circle round me,
 Holds me fast against my will.
 Cruel maid, her charms enslave me :
 I must live as she would have me.
 Ah ! how great the change to me !
 Love ! when wilt thou set me free ?

— *Editor's Version.*

Why dost draw me thus without resistance
 To that splendour bright ?
 Was not glad and happy my existence
 In the dreary night ?

Secretly shut up within my chamber,
 I in moonshine lay :
 In the showers of its light, sweet slumber
 Over me did sway.

There I of rich golden hours was dreaming,
 Of joy unalloyed :
 Thy dear image with full beauty beaming
 In my breast I spied.

Is't still I, whom thou oft at card-table
 Hold'st 'midst many lights,
 Seatest, as I scarce to bear am able,
 Opposite such frights ?

Not more charming now to me spring's gladness
 Is when blossoms start :
 Where thou, angel, art, is love and goodness ;
 Nature where thou art.

— *Editor's Version.*

Whoever reads these songs attentively to himself, or, better still, sings them with feeling, will certainly feel a breath of the fulness of those happy hours stealing over him.

But we will not take leave of that greater and more brilliant society, without adding some further remarks, especially to explain the close of the second poem.

She, whom I was accustomed to see only in a simple dress which was seldom changed, now stood before me on such occasions in all the splendour of elegant fashion; and still she was the same. Her usual grace and kindness of manner remained, only I should say her gift of attracting shone more conspicuous, — perhaps, because brought into contact with several persons, she seemed called upon to express herself with more animation, and to exhibit herself on more sides, as various characters approached her. At any rate, I could not deny, on the one hand, that these strangers were annoying to me; while, on the other, I would not for a great deal have deprived myself of the pleasure of witnessing her talents for society, and of seeing that she was made for a wider and more general sphere.

Though covered with ornaments, it was still the same bosom that had opened to me its inmost secrets, and into which I could look as clearly as into my own: they were still the same lips that had so lately described to me the state of things amidst which she had grown up, and had spent her early years. Every look that we interchanged, every accompanying smile, bespoke a noble feeling of mutual intelligence; and I was myself astonished, here in the crowd, at the secret innocent understanding which existed between us in the most human, the most natural way.

But, with returning spring, the pleasant freedom of the country was to knit still closer these relations. Offenbach-on-the-Main showed even then the considerable beginnings of a promising city. Beautiful, and

for the times splendid, buildings, were already conspicuous. Of these Uncle Bernard (to call him by his familiar title) inhabited the largest; extensive factories were adjoining; D'Orville, a lively young man of amiable qualities, lived opposite. Contiguous gardens and terraces, reaching down to the Main, and affording a free egress in every direction into the lovely surrounding scenery, put both visitors and residents into excellent humour. The lover could not find a more desirable spot for indulging his feelings.

I lived at the house of John André; and as I have here to mention this man, who afterward made himself well enough known, I must indulge in a short digression, in order to give some idea of the state of the opera at that time.

In Frankfort, Marchand was director of the theatre, and exerted himself in his own person to do all that was possible. In his best years he had been a fine, large, well-made man; the easy and gentle qualities appeared to predominate in his character; his presence on the stage, therefore, was agreeable enough. He had, perhaps, as much voice as was required for the execution of any of the musical works of that day: accordingly he endeavoured to adapt to our stage the large and smaller French operas.

The part of the father in Gretry's opera of "Beauty and the Beast" particularly suited him, and his acting was quite expressive in the scene of the Vision which was contrived at the back of the stage.

This opera, successful in its way, approached, however, the lofty style, and was calculated to excite the tenderest feelings. On the other hand, a demon of realism had got possession of the opera-house: operas founded upon different crafts and classes were brought out. "The Huntsmen," "The Coopers," and I know not what else, were produced: André chose "The Potter." He had written the words himself, and, upon

that part of the text which belonged to him, had lavished his whole musical talent.

I was lodging with him, and will only say so much as occasion demands of this ever ready poet and composer.

He was a man of an innate lively talent, and was settled at Offenbach, where he properly carried on a mechanical business and manufacture: he floated between the chapel-master (or precentor) and the *dilettante*. In the hope of meriting the former title, he toiled very earnestly to gain a thorough knowledge of the science of music: in the latter character he was inclined to repeat his own compositions without end.

Among the persons who at this time were most active in filling and enlivening our circle, the pastor Ewald must be first named. In society an intellectual, agreeable companion, he still carried on in private quietly and diligently the studies of his profession, and in fact afterward honourably distinguished himself in the province of theology. Ewald, in short, was an indispensable member of our circle, being quick alike of comprehension and reply.

Lilli's pianoforte-playing completely fettered our good André to our society: what with instructing, conducting, and executing, there were few hours of the day or night in which he was not either in the family circle or at our social parties.

Bürger's "Leonore," then but just published, and received with enthusiasm by the Germans, had been set to music by him: this piece he was always forward to execute, however often it might be encored.

I too, who was in the habit of repeating pieces of poetry with animation, was always ready to recite it. Our friends at this time did not get weary of the constant repetition of the same thing. When the company had their choice which of us they would rather hear, the decision was often in my favour.

All this (however it might be) served to prolong the intercourse of the lovers. They knew no bounds ; and, between them both, they easily managed to keep the good John André continually in motion, that, by repetitions, he might make his music last till midnight. The two lovers thus secured for themselves a precious and indispensable opportunity.

If we walked out early in the morning, we found ourselves in the freshest air, but not precisely in the country. Imposing buildings, which at that time would have done honour to a city ; gardens, spreading before us and easily overlooked, with their smooth flower and ornamental beds ; a clear prospect commanding the opposite banks of the river, over whose surface, even at an early hour, might be seen floating a busy line of rafts or nimble market-skiffs and boats, — these together formed a gently gliding, living world, in harmony with love's tender feelings. Even the lonely rippling of the waves and rustling of the reeds in a softly flowing stream was highly refreshing, and never failed to throw a decidedly tranquillising spell over those who approached the spot. A clear sky of the finest season of the year overarched the whole ; and most pleasant was it to renew morning after morning her dear society, in the midst of such scenes.

Should such a mode of life seem too irregular, too trivial, to the earnest reader, let him consider, that, between what is here brought closely together for the sake of a convenient order, there intervened whole days and weeks of renunciation, other engagements and occupations, and indeed an insupportable tedium.

Men and women were busily engaged in their spheres of duty. I too, out of regard for the present and the future, delayed not to attend to all my obligations ; and I found time enough to finish that to which my talent and my passion irresistibly impelled me.

The earliest hours of the morning I devoted to

poetry : the middle of the day was assigned to worldly business, which was handled in a manner quite peculiar. My father, a thorough and indeed finished jurist, managed himself such business as arose from the care of his own property, and a connection with highly valued friends : for, although his character as imperial councillor did not allow him to practise, he was at hand as legal adviser to many a friend ; while the papers he had prepared were signed by a regular advocate, who received a consideration for every such signature.

This activity of his had now become more lively since my return ; and I could easily remark, that he prized my talent higher than my practice, and on that account did what he could to leave me time for my poetical studies and productions. Sound and thoroughly apt, but slow of conception and execution, he studied the papers as private *Referendarius* ; and, when we came together, he would state the case, and left me to work it out, in which I showed so much readiness, that he felt a father's purest joy, and once could not refrain from declaring, " that, if I were not of his own blood, he should envy me."

To lighten our work we had engaged a scribe, whose character and individuality, well worked out, would have helped to adorn a romance. After his school-years, which had been profitably spent, and in which he had become fully master of Latin, and acquired some other useful branches of knowledge, a dissipated academic life had brought trouble on the remainder of his days. He, for a time, dragged on a wretched existence in sickness and in poverty, till at last he contrived to improve his circumstances by the aid of a fine handwriting and a readiness at accounts. Employed by some advocates, he gradually acquired an accurate knowledge of the formalities of legal business, and by his faithfulness and punctuality made every

one he served his patron. He had been frequently employed by our family, and was always at hand in matters of law and account.

He also was a useful assistant in our continually increasing business, which consisted, not only of law matters, but also of various sorts of commissions, orders, and transit agencies. In the city-hall he knew all the passages and windings; in his way, he was in tolerable favour at both burgomasters' audiences; and since from his first entrance into office, and even during the times of his equivocal behaviour, he had been well acquainted with many of the new senators, some of whom had quickly risen to the dignity of *Schoffen*, he had acquired a certain confidence, which might be called a sort of influence. All this he knew how to turn to the advantage of his patrons; and, since the state of his health forced him to limit his application to writing, he was always found ready to execute every commission or order with care.

His presence was not disagreeable; he was slender in person and of regular features; his manner was unobtrusive, though a certain expression betrayed his conviction that he knew all what was necessary to be done; moreover, he was cheerful and dexterous in clearing away difficulties. He must have been full forty, and (to say the same thing over again) I regret that I have never introduced him as the mainspring in the machinery of some novel.

Hoping that my more serious readers are now somewhat satisfied by what I have just related, I will venture to turn again to that bright point of time when love and friendship shone in their fairest light.

It was in the nature of such social circles that all birthdays should be carefully celebrated with every variety of rejoicing; it was in honour of the birthday of the pastor Ewald that the following song was written :

In every hour of pleasure,
 Enhanced by love and wine,
 To sing this song's gay measure,
 Let ever us combine.
 The god holds us united,
 Who hither brought us, who
 Our flames he erst ignited,
 Now lighteth up anew.

— *Editor's Version.*

Since this song has been preserved until this day, and there is scarcely a merry party at which it is not joyfully revived, we commend it also to all that shall come after us; and to all who sing it or recite it we wish the same delight and inward satisfaction which we then had, when we had no thought of any wider world, but felt ourselves a world to ourselves in that narrow circle.

It will, of course, be expected that Lilli's birthday, which, on the 23d June, 1775, returned for the seventeenth time, was to be celebrated with especial honours. She had promised to come to Offenbach at noon; and I must observe that our friends, with a happy unanimity, had laid aside all customary compliments at this festival, and had prepared for her reception and entertainment nothing but such heartfelt tokens as were worthy of her.

Busied with such pleasant duties, I saw the sun go down, announcing a bright day to follow, and promising its glad, beaming presence at our feast, when Lilli's brother, George, who knew not how to dissemble, came somewhat rudely into the chamber, and, without sparing our feelings, gave us to understand that to-morrow's intended festival was put off; he himself could not tell how or why, but his sister had bid him say that it would be wholly impossible for her to come to Offenbach at noon that day, and take part in the intended festival; she had no hope of arriving before evening.

She knew and felt most sensibly how vexatious and disagreeable it must be to me and all her friends, but she begged me very earnestly to invent some expedient which might soften and perhaps do away the unpleasant effects of this news, which she left it to me to announce. If I could, she would give me her warmest thanks.

I was silent for a moment; but I quickly recovered myself, and, as if by heavenly inspiration, saw what was to be done. "Make haste, George!" I cried, "tell her to make herself easy, and do her best to come toward evening: I promise that this very disappointment shall be turned into a cause of rejoicing!" The boy was curious, and wanted to know how. I refused to gratify his curiosity, notwithstanding that he called to his aid all the arts and all the influence which a brother of our beloved can presume to exercise.

No sooner had he gone, than I walked up and down in my chamber with a singular self-satisfaction; and, with the glad, free feeling that here was a brilliant opportunity of proving myself her devoted servant, I stitched together several sheets of paper with beautiful silk, as suited alone such an occasional poem, and hastened to write down the title:

"SHE IS NOT COMING !

"A Mournful Family Piece, which, by the sore visitation of Divine Providence, will be represented in the most natural manner on the 23d of June, 1775, at Offenbach-on-the-Main. The action lasts from morning until evening."

I have not by me either the original or a copy of this *jeu d'esprit*; I have often inquired after one, but have never been able to get a trace of it; I must therefore compose it anew, a thing which, in the general way, is not difficult.

The scene is at D'Orville's house and garden in

Offenbach: the action opens with the domestics, of whom each one plays his special part; and evident preparations for a festival are being made. The children, drawn to the life, run in and out among them; the master appears, and the mistress, actively discharging her appropriate functions; then, in the midst of the hurry and bustle of active preparation, comes in neighbour Hans André, the indefatigable composer; he seats himself at the piano, and calls them all together to hear him try his new song, which he has just finished for the festival. He gathers around him the whole house, but all soon disperse again to attend to pressing duties; one is called away by another, this person wants the help of that; at last, the arrival of the gardener draws attention to the preparations in the grounds and on the water; wreaths, banners with ornamental inscriptions, in short, nothing is forgotten.

While they are all assembled around the most attractive objects, in steps a messenger, who, as a sort of humorous go-between, was also entitled to play his part, and who, although he has had plenty of drink-money, could still pretty shrewdly guess what was the state of the case. He sets a high value on his packet, demands a glass of wine and a wheaten roll, and after some roguish hesitation hands over his despatches. The master of the house lets his arms drop, the papers fall to the floor: he calls out, "Let me go to the table! let me go to the bureau, that I may brush."

The spirited intercourse of vivacious persons is chiefly distinguished by a certain symbolical style of speech and gesture. A sort of conventional idiom arises, which, while it makes the initiated very happy, is unobserved by the stranger, or, if observed, is disagreeable.

Among Lilli's most pleasing particularities was the one which is here expressed by the word *brushing*,

and which manifested itself whenever anything disagreeable was said or told, especially when she sat at table, or was near any flat surface.

It had its origin in a most fascinating but odd expedient, which she once had recourse to when a stranger, sitting near her at table, uttered something unseemly. Without altering her mild countenance, she brushed with her right hand, most prettily, across the table-cloth, and deliberately pushed off on to the floor everything she reached with this gentle motion. I know not what did not fall, — knives, forks, bread, saltcellar, and also something belonging to her neighbour; every one was startled; the servants ran up; and no one knew what it all meant, except the observing ones, who were delighted that she had rebuked and checked an impropriety in so pretty a manner.

Here now was a symbol found to express the repulsion of anything disagreeable, which still is frequently made use of in clever, hearty, estimable, well-meaning, and not thoroughly polished, society. We all adopted the motion of the right hand as a sign of reprobation: the actual brushing away of objects was a thing which afterward she herself indulged in only moderately and with good taste.

When, therefore, the poet gives to the master of the house, as a piece of dumb show, this desire for brushing (a habit which had become with us a second nature), the meaning and effect of the action and its tendency are at once apparent; for, while he threatens to sweep everything from all flat surfaces, everybody tries to hinder him and to pacify him, till finally he throws himself exhausted on a seat.

“What has happened?” all exclaimed. “Is she sick? Is any one dead?” “Read! read!” cries D’Orville: “there it lies on the ground.” The despatch is picked up: they read it, and exclaim, “*She is not coming!*”

The great terror had prepared them for a greater; but she was well — nothing had happened to her! no one of the family was hurt: hope pointed still to the evening.

André, who in the meanwhile had kept on with his music, came running up at last, consoling, and seeking consolation. Pastor Ewald and his wife likewise came in quite characteristically, disappointed and yet reasonable, sorry for the disappointment, and yet quietly accepting all for the best. Everything now is at sixes and sevens, until the calm and exemplary uncle Bernard finally approaches, expecting a good breakfast and a comfortable dinner; and he is the only one who sees the matter from the right point of view. He, by reasonable speeches, sets all to rights, just as in the Greek tragedy a god manages with a few words to clear up the perplexities of the greatest heroes.

All this I had dashed off "*currente calamo*" through a part of the night, and given to a messenger with instructions to deliver it in Offenbach the next morning precisely at ten o'clock.

Next day when I awoke, it was one of the brightest mornings possible; and I set off just in time to arrive at Offenbach, as I purposed, precisely at noon.

I was received with the strangest *charivari* of salutations; the interrupted feast was scarcely mentioned; they scolded and rated me, because I had taken them off so well. The domestics were contented with being introduced on the same stage with their superiors: only the children, those most decided and indomitable realists, obstinately insisted that they had not talked so and so, that everything in fact went quite differently from the way in which it there stood written. I appeased them by some foretastes of the supper-table, and they loved me as much as ever. A cheerful dinner-party, with some though not all of our intended festivities, put us in the mood of receiving Lilli with less

splendour, but perhaps the more affectionately. She came, and was welcomed by cheerful, nay, merry, faces, surprised to find that her staying away had not marred all our cheerfulness. They told her everything, they laid the whole thing before her; and she, in her dear, sweet way, thanked me as only she could thank.

It required no remarkable acuteness to perceive that her absence from the festival held in her honour was not accidental, but had been caused by gossiping about the intimacy between us. However, this had not the slightest influence, either on our sentiments or our behaviour.

At this season of the year there never failed to be a varied throng of visitors from the city. Frequently I did not join the company until late in the evening, when I found her apparently sympathising; and, since I commonly appeared only for a few hours, I was glad of an opportunity to be useful to her in any way, by attending to or undertaking some commission, whether trifling or not, in her behalf. And, indeed, this service is probably the most delightful a man can enter upon, as the old romances of chivalry contrive how to intimate in their obscure but powerful manner. That she ruled over me, was not to be concealed, and in this pride she might well indulge; for in this contest the victor and the vanquished both triumph, and enjoy an equal glory.

This my repeated, though often brief, coöperation, was always so much the more effective. John André had always store of music; I contributed new pieces, either by others or myself; so that poetical and musical blossoms showered down upon us. It was altogether a brilliant time: a certain excitement reigned in the company, and there were no insipid moments. Without further question, it seemed to be communicated to all the rest. For, where inclination and passion come out in their own bold nature, they encourage

timid souls, who cannot comprehend why they should suppress their equally valid rights. Hence relations, which hitherto were more or less concealed, were now seen to intertwine themselves without reserve; while others, which did not confess themselves so openly, still glided on agreeably in the shade.

If, because of my multifarious avocations, I could not pass whole days out of doors with her, yet the clear evenings gave us opportunity for prolonged meetings in the open air. Loving souls will be pleased to read the following event.

Ours was a condition of which it is written, "I sleep, but my heart wakes;" the bright and the dark hours were alike; the light of the day could not outshine the light of love, and the night was made as the brightest day by the radiance of passion.

One clear starlight evening we had been walking about in the open country till it was quite late; and after I had seen her and her friends home to their several doors, and finally had taken leave of her, I felt so little inclined to sleep, that I did not hesitate to set off on another ramble. I took the highroad to Frankfurt, giving myself up to my thoughts and hopes: here I seated myself on a bench, in the purest stillness of night, under the gleaming starry heavens, that I might belong only to myself and her.

My attention was attracted by a sound quite near me, which I could not explain; it was not a rattling nor a rustling noise; and on closer observation I discovered that it was under the ground, and caused by the working of some little animal. It might be a hedgehog or a weasel, or whatever creature labours in that way at such hours.

Having set off again toward the city, and got near to the Röderberg, I recognised, by their chalk-white gleam, the steps which lead up to the vineyards. I ascended them, sat down, and fell asleep.

When I awoke, dawn had already spread; and I found myself opposite the high wall, which in earlier times had been erected to defend the heights on this side. Saxenhausen lay before me, light mists marked out the course of the river: it was cool, and to me most welcome.

There I waited till the sun, rising gradually behind me, lighted up the opposite landscape. It was the spot where I was again to see my beloved, and I returned slowly back to the paradise which surrounded her yet sleeping.

On account of my increasing circle of business, which, from love to her, I was anxious to extend and to establish, my visits to Offenbach became more rare, and hence arose a somewhat painful predicament; so that it might well be remarked, that, for the sake of the future, one postpones and loses the present.

As my prospects were now gradually improving, I took them to be more promising than they really were; and I thought the more about coming to a speedy explanation, since so public an intimacy could not go on much longer without misconstruction. And, as is usual in such cases, we did not expressly say it to one another; but the feeling of being mutually pleased in every way, the full conviction that a separation was impossible, the confidence reposed in one another,—all this produced such a seriousness, that I, who had firmly resolved never again to get involved in any troublesome connection of the kind, and who found myself, nevertheless, entangled in this, without the certainty of a favourable result, was actually beset with a heaviness of mind, to get rid of which I plunged more and more in indifferent worldly affairs, from which, apart from my beloved, I had no care to derive either profit or pleasure.

In this strange situation, the like of which many, no doubt, have with pain experienced, there came to our

aid a friend of the family, who saw through characters and situations very clearly. She was called Mlle. Delf: she presided with her elder sister over a little business in Heidelberg, and on several occasions had received many favours from the greater Frankfort commission-house. She had known and loved Lilli from her youth: she was quite a peculiar person, of an earnest, masculine look, and with an even, firm, hasty step. She had had peculiar reason to adapt herself to the world; and hence she understood it, in a certain sense at least. She could not be called intriguing; she was accustomed to consider distant contingencies, and to carry out her plans in silence: but then, she had the gift of seeing an opportunity; and, if she found people wavering betwixt doubt and resolution at the moment when everything depended upon decision, she skilfully contrived to infuse into their minds such a force of character, that she seldom failed to accomplish her purpose. Properly speaking, she had no selfish ends: to have done anything, to have completed anything, especially to have brought about a marriage, was reward enough for her. She had long since seen through our position, and, in repeated visits, had carefully observed the state of affairs, so that she had finally convinced herself that the attachment must be favoured; that our plans, honestly but not very skilfully taken in hand and prosecuted, must be promoted, and that this little romance be brought to a close as speedily as possible.

For many years she had enjoyed the confidence of Lilli's mother. Introduced by me to my parents, she had managed to make herself agreeable to them; for her rough sort of manner is seldom offensive in an imperial city, and, backed by cleverness and tact, is even welcome. She knew very well our wishes and our hopes; her love of meddling made her see in all this a call upon her good offices; in short, she had

a conversation with our parents. How she commenced it, how she put aside the difficulties which must have stood in her way, I know not; but she came to us one evening, and brought the consent. "Take each other by the hand!" cried she, in her pathetic yet commanding manner. I stood opposite to Lilli, and offered her my hand: she, not indeed hesitatingly, but still slowly, placed hers in it. After a long and deep breath, we fell with lively emotion into each other's arms.

It was a strange decree of the overruling Providence that, in the course of my singular history, I should also have experienced the feelings of one who is betrothed.

I may venture to assert, that, for a truly moral man, it is the most agreeable of all recollections. It is pleasant to recall those feelings, which are with difficulty expressed and are hardly to be explained. For him the state of things is all at once changed; the sharpest oppositions are removed, the most inveterate differences are adjusted; prompting nature, ever-warning reason, the tyrannising impulses, and the sober law, which before kept up a perpetual strife within us, all are now reconciled in friendly unity; and at the festival, so universally celebrated with solemn rites, that which was forbidden is commanded, and that which was penal is raised to an inviolable duty.

The reader will learn with moral approval, that, from this time forward, a certain change took place in me. If my beloved had hitherto been looked upon as beautiful, graceful, and attractive, now she appeared to me a being of superior worth and excellence. She was, as it were, a double person: her grace and loveliness belonged to me, — that I felt as formerly; but the dignity of her character, her self-reliance, her confidence in all persons, remained her own. I beheld it, I looked through it, I was delighted with it as with

a capital of which I should enjoy the interest as long as I lived.

There is depth and significance in the old remark, on the summit of fortune one abides not long. The consent of the parties on both sides, so gained in such a peculiar manner by Demoiselle Delf, was now ratified silently and without further formality. But as soon as we believe the matter to be all settled — as soon as the ideal, as we may well call it, of a betrothal is over, and it begins to pass into the actual, and to enter soberly into facts, then too often comes a crisis. The outward world is utterly unmerciful, and it has reason; for it must maintain its authority at all costs; the confidence of passion is very great, and we see it too often wrecked upon the rocks of opposing realities. A young married couple who enter upon life unprovided with sufficient means, can promise themselves no honeymoon, especially in these latter times: the world immediately presses upon them with incompatible demands, which, if not satisfied, make the young couple appear ridiculous.

Of the insufficiency of the means which, for the attainment of my end, I had anxiously scraped together, I could not before be aware, because they had held out up to a certain point; but, now the end was drawing nearer, I saw that matters were not quite what they ought to be.

The fallacy, which passion finds so convenient, was now exposed in all its inconsistency. My house, my domestic circumstances, had to be considered in all their details, with some soberness. The consciousness that his house would one day contain a daughter-in-law, lay indeed at the bottom of my father's design; but then, what sort of a lady did he contemplate?

At the end of our third part, the reader made the acquaintance of the gentle, dear, intelligent, beautiful, and talented maiden, so always like herself, so affec-

tionate, and yet so free from passion : she was a fitting keystone to the arch already built and curved. But here, upon calm, unbiassed consideration, it could not be denied, that, in order to establish the newly acquired treasure in such a function, a new arch would have to be built !

However, this had not yet become clear to me ; and still less was it so to her mind. But now, when I tried to fancy myself bringing her to my home, she did not seem somehow to suit it exactly. It appeared to me something like what I had myself experienced, when I first joined her social circle : in order to give no offence to the fashionable people I met there, I found it necessary to make a great change in my style of dress. But this could not be so easily done with the domestic arrangement of a stately burgher's house, which, rebuilt in the olden style, had, with its antique ornaments, given an old-fashioned character to the habits of its inmates.

Moreover, even after our parents' consent had been gained, it had not been possible to establish friendly relations or intercourse between our respective families. Different religious opinions produced different manners ; and, if the amiable girl had wished to continue in any way her former mode of life, it would have found neither opportunity nor place in our moderate-sized house.

If I had never thought of all this until now, it was because I had been quieted by the opening of fine prospects from without, and the hope of getting some valuable appointment. An active spirit gets a footing everywhere ; capacities, talents, create confidence ; every one thinks that a change of management is all that is needed. The earnestness of youth finds favour : genius is trusted for everything, though its power is only of a certain kind.

The intellectual and literary domain of Germany

was at that time regarded as but newly broken ground. Among the business people there were prudent men, who desired skilful cultivators and prudent managers for the fields about to be turned up. Even the respectable and well-established Free-Mason's lodge, with the most distinguished members of which I had become acquainted through my intimacy with Lilli, contrived in a suitable manner to get me introduced to them; but I, from a feeling of independence, which afterward appeared to me madness, declined all closer connection with them, not perceiving that these men, though already bound together in a higher sense, would yet do much to further my own ends, so nearly related to theirs.

I return to more personal matters.

In such cities as Frankfort, men often hold several situations together, such as residentships and agencies, the number of which may by diligence be indefinitely increased. Something of this sort now occurred to me, and at first sight it seemed both advantageous and honourable. It was assumed that I should suit the place; and it would, under the conditions, certainly have succeeded, if it could have commanded the co-operation of the Chancery triad already described. We thus suppress our doubts; we dwell only on what is favourable; by powerful activity we overcome all wavering, whence there results a something untrue in our position, without the force of passion being in the least subdued.

In times of peace there is no more interesting reading for the multitude than the public papers, which furnish early information of the latest doings in the world. The quiet, opulent citizen exercises thus in an innocent way a party spirit, which, in our finite nature, we neither can nor should get rid of. Every comfortable person thus gets up a factitious interest, like that which is often felt in a bet, experiences

an unreal gain or loss, and, as in the theatre, feels a very lively, though imaginary, sympathy in the good or evil fortune of others. This sympathy seems often arbitrary, but it rests on moral grounds. For now we give to praiseworthy designs the applause they deserve; and now again, carried away by brilliant successes, we turn to those whose plans we should otherwise have blamed. For all this there was abundant material in those times.

Frederick the Second, resting on his victories, seemed to hold in his hand the fate of Europe and of the world: Catherine, a great woman, who had proved herself every way worthy of a throne, afforded ample sphere of action to able and highly gifted men, in extending the dominion of their empress; and as this was done at the expense of the Turks, whom we are in the habit of richly repaying for the contempt with which they look down upon us, it seemed as if it was no sacrifice of human life, when these infidels were slain by thousands. The burning of the fleet in the harbour of Tschesme caused a universal jubilee throughout the civilised world; and every one shared the exultation of a victory when, in order to preserve a faithful picture of that great event, a ship-of-war was actually blown up on the roads of Livorno, before the studio of an artist. Not long after this, a young Northern king, to establish his own authority, seized the reins of government out of the hands of an oligarchy. The aristocrats he overthrew were not lamented, for aristocracy finds no favour with the public, since it is in its nature to work in silence, and it is the more secure the less talk it creates about itself; and in this case the people thought all the better of the young king, since, in order to balance the enmity of the higher ranks, he was obliged to favour the lower, and to conciliate their good will.

The lively interest of the world was still more

excited when a whole people prepared to effect their independence. Already had it witnessed a welcome spectacle of the same effort on a small scale: Corsica had long been the point to which all eyes were directed; Paoli, when, despairing of ever being able to carry out his patriotic designs, he passed through Germany to England, attracted and won all hearts; he was a fine man, slender, fair, full of grace and friendliness. I saw him in the house of Bethmann, where he stopped a short time, and received with cheerful cordiality the curious visitors who thronged to see him. But now similar events were to be repeated in a remote quarter of the globe: we wished the Americans all success; and the names of Franklin and Washington began to shine and sparkle in the firmament of politics and war. Much had been accomplished to improve the condition of humanity; and now when, in France, a new and benevolent sovereign evinced the best intentions of devoting himself to the removal of so many abuses, and to the noblest ends, — of introducing a regular and efficient system of political economy, of dispensing with all arbitrary power, and of ruling alone by law and justice — the brightest hopes spread over the world; and confident youth promised itself and to all mankind a bright and noble future.

In all these events, however, I only took part so far as they interested society in general; I myself and my immediate circle did not meddle with the news of the day: our affair was to study men; men in general we allowed to have their way.

The quiet position of the German Fatherland, to which also my native city had now conformed for upwards of a hundred years, had been fully preserved in spite of many wars and convulsions. A highly varied gradation of ranks, which, instead of holding the several classes apart, seemed to bind them the

more closely together, had promoted the interest of all, from the highest to the lowest,—from the emperor to the Jew. If the sovereign princes stood in a subordinate relation to the emperor, still their electoral rights and immunities, thereby acquired and maintained, were a full compensation. Moreover, the highest nobility belonged exclusively to the agnates of the royal houses; so that, in the enjoyment of their distinguished privileges, they could look upon themselves as equal with the highest, and even superior to them in some sense, since, as spiritual electors, they might take precedence of all others, and, as branches of the sacred hierarchy, hold an honourable and uncontested rank.

If, now, we think of the extraordinary privileges which these ancient houses enjoyed, not only in their old patrimonial estates, but also in the ecclesiastical endowments, the knightly orders, the official administration of the empire, and the old brotherhoods and alliances for mutual defence and protection, we can vainly conceive that this great body of influential men, feeling themselves at once subordinated to and coördinate with the highest, and occupying their days with a regular round of employments, might well be contented with their situation, and would without further anxiety seek only to secure and transmit to their successors the same comforts and prerogatives. Nor was this class deficient in intellectual culture. Already for more than a century the decided proofs of high training in military and political science had been discernible in our noble soldiers and diplomatists. But at the same time there were many minds, who, through literary and philosophical studies, had arrived at views not over favourable to the existing state of things.

In Germany scarcely any one had as yet learned to look with envy on that monstrous privileged class,

or to grudge its fortunate advantages. The middle class had devoted themselves undisturbed to commerce and the sciences, and by these pursuits, as well as by the practice of the mechanic arts, so closely related to them, had raised themselves to a position of importance, which fully balanced its political inferiority: the free or half-free cities favoured this activity, while individuals felt a certain quiet satisfaction in it. The man who increased his wealth, or enhanced his intellectual influence, especially in matters of law or state, could always be sure of enjoying both respect and authority. In the supreme courts of the empire, and, indeed, in all others, a learned bench stood parallel with the noble; the uncontrolled oversight of the one managed to keep in harmony with the deepest insight of the other, and experience could never detect a trace of rivalry between them; the noble felt secure in his exclusive and time-hallowed privileges, and the burgher felt it beneath his dignity to strive for a semblance of them by a little prefix to his name.¹ The merchant, the manufacturer, had enough to do to keep pace with those of other nations in progress and improvement. Leaving out of the account the usual temporary fluctuations, we may certainly say that it was on the whole a time of pure advance, such as had not appeared before, and such as, on account of another and greater progress, both of mind and things, could not long continue.

My position with regard to the higher classes at this time was very favourable. In "Werther," to be sure, the disagreeable circumstances which arise just at the boundary between two distinct positions, were descanted upon with some impatience; but this was overlooked in consideration of the generally passionate

¹The "von," which in Germany those who are ennobled prefix to their surnames.

character of the book, since every one felt that it had no reference to any immediate effect.

But "Götz von Berlichingen" had set me quite right with the upper classes: whatever improprieties might be charged upon my earlier literary productions, in this work I had with great learning and much felicity depicted the old German constitution, with its inviolable emperor at the head, with its many degrees of nobility, and a knight who, in a time of general lawlessness, had determined as a private man to act uprightly, if not lawfully, and thus fell into a very sorry predicament. This complicated story, however, was not snatched from the air, but founded on fact; it was cheerful, lively, and consequently here and there a little modern; but it was, nevertheless, on the whole, in the same spirit as the brave and capable man had with some degree of skill set it forth in his own narrative.

The family still flourished: its relation to the Frankish knighthood had remained in all its integrity; although that relation, like many others at that time, might have grown somewhat faint and nominal.

Now all at once the little stream of Jaxt, and the castle of Jaxthausen, acquired a poetical importance: they, as well as the city-hall of Heilbronn, were visited by travellers.

It was known that I had a mind to write of other points of that historical period; and many a family, which could readily deduce their origin from that time, hoped to see their ancestors brought to the light in the same way.

A strange satisfaction is generally felt, when a writer felicitously brings a nation's history to its recollection: men rejoice in the virtues of their ancestors, and smile at the failings, which they believe they themselves have long since got rid of. Such a deline-

ation never fails to meet with sympathy and applause, and in this respect I enjoyed an envied influence.

Yet it may be worth while to remark, that among the numerous advances, and in the multitude of young persons who attached themselves to me, there was found no nobleman: on the other hand, many who had already arrived at the age of thirty came in search of, and visited me; and of these the willing and striving were pervaded by a joyful hope of earnestly developing themselves in a national and even more universally humane sense.

At this time a general curiosity about the epoch between the fifteenth and sixteenth century had commenced, and was very lively. The works of Ulrich von Hutten had fallen into my hands; and I was not a little struck to see something so similar to what had taken place in his time, again manifesting itself in our later days.

The following letter of Ulrich von Hutten to Billibald Pyrkheymer may therefore suitably find place here:

“What fortune gives us, it generally takes away again; and not only that—everything else which accrues to man from without, is, we see, liable to accident and change. And yet, notwithstanding, I am now striving for honour, which I should wish to obtain, if possible, without envy, but still at any cost; for a fiery thirst for glory possesses me, so that I wish to be ennobled as highly as possible. I should make but a poor figure in my own eyes, dear Billibald, if, born in the rank, in the family I am, and of such ancestors, I could be content to hold myself to be noble, though I never ennobled myself by my own exertions. So great a work have I in my mind! My thoughts are higher! It is not that I would see myself promoted to a more distinguished and more brilliant rank; but I would fain seek a fountain elsewhere,

out of which I might draw a peculiar nobility of my own, and not be counted among the factitious nobility, contented with what I have received from my ancestors. On the contrary, I would add to those advantages something of my own, which may, from me, pass over to my posterity.

“Therefore, in my studies and efforts, I proceed in opposition to the opinion of those who consider that what actually exists is enough; for to me nothing of that sort is enough, according to what I have already confessed to you of my ambition in this respect. And I here avow that I do not envy those who, starting from the lowest stations, have climbed higher than I; for on this point I by no means agree with those of my own rank, who are wont to sneer at persons, who, of a lower origin, have, by their own talents, raised themselves to eminence. For those with perfect right are to be preferred to us, who have seized for themselves and taken possession of the material of glory, which we ourselves neglected: they may be the sons of fullers or of tanners; but they have contrived to attain their ends, by struggling with greater difficulties than we should have had against us. The ignorant man, that envies him who by his knowledge has distinguished himself, is not only to be called a fool, but is to be reckoned among the miserable — indeed, among the most miserable; and with this disease are our nobles especially affected, that they look with an evil eye upon such accomplishments. For what, in God’s name! Is it to envy one who possesses that which we have despised? Why have we not applied ourselves to the law? Why have we not ourselves this excellent learning, the best arts? And now fullers, shoemakers, and wheelwrights have got ahead of us. Why have we forsaken our post, why left the most liberal studies to hired servants and (shamefully for us!) to the very lowest of the people? Most justly has that inheritance

of nobility which we have thrown away been taken possession of by every clever and diligent plebeian who makes it profitable by its own industry. Wretched beings that we are, who neglect that which suffices to raise the very humblest above us: let us cease to envy, and strive also to obtain what others, to our deep disgrace, have claimed for themselves.

“Every longing for glory is honourable: all striving for the excellent is praiseworthy. To every rank may its own honour remain, may its own ornaments be secured to it! Those statues of my ancestors I do not despise any more than the richly endowed pedigree: but, whatever their worth may be, it is not ours, unless by our own merits we make it ours; nor can it endure, if the nobility do not adopt the habits which become them. In vain will yonder fat and corpulent head of a noble house point to the images of his ancestors, whilst he himself, inactive, resembles a clod rather than those whose virtues throw a halo upon his name from bygone days.

“So much have I wished most fully and most frankly to confide to you respecting my ambition and my nature.”

Although, perhaps, not exactly in the same train of ideas, yet the same excellent and strong sentiments had I to hear from my more distinguished friends and acquaintances, of which the results appeared in an honest activity. It had become a creed, that every one must earn for himself a personal nobility; and, if any rivalry appeared in those fine days, it was from above downwards.

We others, on the contrary, had what we wished, — the free and approved exercise of the talents lent to us by nature, as far as could consist with all our civil relations.

For my native city had in this a very peculiar position, and one which has not been enough considered.

While, of the free imperial cities, the northern could boast of an extended commerce, but the southern, declining in commercial importance, cultivated the arts and manufactures with more success, Frankfort-on-the-Main exhibited a somewhat mixed character, combining the results of trade, wealth, and capital with the passion for learning, and its collection of works of art.

The Lutheran Confession controlled its government: the ancient lordship of the *Gan*, now bearing the name of the house of Limburg; the house of Frauenstein, originally only a club, but, during the troubles occasioned by the lower classes, faithful to the side of intelligence; the jurist, and others well to do and well disposed, — none was excluded from the magistracy: even those mechanics who had upheld the cause of order at a critical time were eligible to the council, though they were only stationary in their place. The other constitutional counterpoises, formal institutions, and whatever else belongs to such a constitution, afforded employment to the activity of many persons; while trade and manufacture, in so favourable a situation, found no obstacle to their growth and prosperity.

The higher nobility kept to itself, unenvied and almost unnoticed: a second class pressing close upon it was forced to be more active, and, resting upon old wealthy family foundations, sought to distinguish itself by political and legal learning.

The members of the so-called Reformed persuasion (Calvinists) composed, like the refugees in other places, a distinguished class, and, when they rode out in fine equipages on Sundays to their service in Bockenheim, seemed almost to celebrate a sort of triumph over the citizen's party, who had the privilege of going to church on foot in good weather and in bad.

The Roman Catholics were scarcely noticed, but they also were aware of the advantages which the other two confessions had appropriated to themselves.

EIGHTEENTH BOOK.

RETURNING to literary matters, I must bring forward a circumstance which had great influence on the German poetry of this period, and which is especially worthy of remark, because this very influence has lasted through the history of our poetic art to the present day, and will not be lost even in the future.

From the earlier times, the Germans were accustomed to rhyme: it had this advantage in its favour, that one could proceed in a very *naïve* manner, scarcely doing more than count the syllables. If, with the progress of improvement, attention began more or less instinctively to be paid also to the sense and signification of the syllables, this was highly praiseworthy, and a merit which many poets contrived to make their own. The rhyme was made to mark the close of the poetical proposition: the smaller divisions were indicated by shorter lines, and a naturally refined ear began to make provision for variety and grace. But now all at once rhyme was rejected before it was considered that the value of the syllables had not as yet been decided, indeed that it was a difficult thing to decide. Klopstock took the lead. How earnestly he toiled, and what he has accomplished, is well known. Every one felt the uncertainty of the matter; many did not like to run a risk; and, stimulated by this natural tendency, they snatched at a poetic prose. Gessner's extremely charming Idylls opened an endless path. Klopstock wrote the dialogue of "Hermann's Schlacht" ("Hermann's Fight") in prose, as well as

*Der Tod Adams" ("The Death of Adam"). Through the domestic tragedies as well as the more classic dramas, a style more lofty and more impassioned gained possession of the theatre; while, on the other hand, the iambic verse of five feet, which the example of the English had spread among us, was reducing poesy to prose. But in general the demand for rhythm and for rhyme could not be silenced. Ramler, though proceeding on vague principles (as he was always severe with respect to his own productions), could not help exercising the same severity upon those of others. He transformed prose into verse, altered and improved the works of others, by which means he earned little thanks, and only confused the matter still more. Those succeeded best who still conformed to the old custom of rhyme with a certain observance of syllable quantity, and who, guided by a natural taste, observed laws though unexpressed and undetermined; as, for example, Wieland, who, although inimitable, for a long time served as a model to more moderate talents.

But still in any case the practice remained uncertain; and there was no one, even among the best, who might not for the moment have gone astray. Hence the misfortune, that this epoch of our poetic history, so peculiarly rich in genius, produced little which, in its kind, could be pronounced correct: for here also the time was stirring, advancing, active, and calling for improvement, but not reflective, and satisfying its own requirements.

In order, however, to find a firm soil on which poetic genius might find a footing — to discover an element in which they could breathe freely, they had gone back some centuries, where earnest talents were brilliantly prominent amid a chaotic state of things; and thus they made friends with the poetic art of those times. The Minnesingers lay too far from us; it would have

been necessary first to study the language, and that was not our object: we wanted to live and not to learn.

Hans Sachs, the really masterly poet, was nearest to our sympathy. A man of true talent, not indeed like the Minnesinging knights and courtiers, but a plain citizen, such as we also boasted ourselves to be. A didactic realism suited us; and on many occasions we made use of the easy rhythm, of the readily occurring rhyme. His manner seemed so suitable to mere poems of the day, and such we needed at every hour.

If important works, which required the attention and labour of a year or a whole life, were built, more or less, upon such hazardous grounds on trivial occasions, it may be imagined how wantonly all other ephemeral productions took their rise and shape; for example, the poetical epistles, parables, and invectives of all forms, with which we went on making war within ourselves, and seeking squabbling abroad.

Of this kind, besides what has already been printed, something, though very little, survives: it may be laid up somewhere. Brief allusions will suffice to reveal to thinking men their origin and purposes. Persons of more than ordinary penetration, to whose sight these may hereafter be brought, will be ready to observe that an honest purpose lay at the bottom of all such eccentricities. An upright will revolts against presumption, nature against conventionalities, talent against forms, genius with itself, energy against indecision, undeveloped capacity against developed mediocrity; so that the whole proceeding may be regarded as a skirmish which follows a declaration of war, and gives promise of a violent contest. For, strictly considered, the contest is not yet fought out, in these fifty years: it is still going on, only in a higher region.

I had, in imitation of an old German puppet-play, invented a wild *extravaganza*, which was to bear the title of "Hanswurst's Hochzeit" ("Jack Pudding's Wedding").¹ The scheme was as follows: Hanswurst, a rich young farmer and an orphan, has just come of age, and wishes to marry a rich maiden, named Ursel Blandine. His guardian, Kilian Brustfleck (*Leather-apron*), and her mother, Ursel, are highly pleased with the purpose. Their long-cherished plans, their dearest wishes, are at last fulfilled and gratified. There is not the slightest obstacle; and properly the whole interest turns only upon this, that the young people's ardour for their union is delayed by the necessary arrangements and formalities of the occasion. As prologue, enters the inviter to the wedding festivities, who proclaims the banns after the traditional fashion, and ends with the rhymes,

The wedding-feast is at the house
Of mine host of the Golden Louse.

To obviate the charge of violating the unity of place, the aforesaid tavern, with its glittering insignia, was placed in the background of the theatre, but so that all its four sides could be presented to view by being turned upon a peg; and, as it was moved around, the front scenes of the stage had to undergo corresponding changes.

In the first act the front of the house facing the street was turned to the audience, with its golden sign magnified as it were by the solar microscope; in the second act, the side toward the garden. The third was toward a little wood; the fourth toward a neighbouring lake, which gave rise to a prediction, that in after-times the decorator would have little difficulty in carry-

¹ Hanswurst is the old German buffoon, whose name answers to the English "Jack Pudding." — TRANS.

ing a wave over the whole stage up to the prompter's box.

But all this does not as yet reveal the peculiar interest of the piece. The principal joke which was carried out, even to an absurd length, arose from the fact that the whole *dramatis personæ* consisted of mere traditional German nicknames, which at once brought out the characters of the individuals, and determined their relations to one another.

As we would fain hope that the present book will be read aloud in good society, and even in decent family circles, we cannot venture, after the custom of every playbill, to name our persons here in order, nor to cite the passages in which they most clearly and prominently showed themselves in their true colours; although, in the simplest way possible, lively, roguish, broad allusions, and witty jokes, could not but arise. We add one leaf as a specimen, leaving our editors the liberty of deciding upon its admissibility.

Cousin Schuft (scamp), through his relationship to the family, was entitled to an invitation to the feast; no one had anything to say against it; for though he was a thoroughly good-for-nothing fellow, yet there he was; and, since he was there, they could not with propriety leave him out; on such a feast-day, too, they were not to remember that they had occasionally been dissatisfied with him.

With Master Schurke (knave), it was a still more serious case: he had, indeed, been useful to the family, when it was to his own profit; on the other hand, again, he had injured it, perhaps, in this case, also with an eye to his own interests, perhaps, too, because he found an opportunity. Those who were anyways prudent voted for his admission: the few who would have excluded him were out-voted.

But there was a third person, about whom it was still more difficult to decide; an orderly man in soci-

ety, no less than others, obliging, agreeable, useful in many ways: he had a single failing, that he could not bear his name to be mentioned, and, as soon as he heard it, was instantaneously transported into a heroic fury, like that which the Northmen call "Berserker-rage," attempted to kill all right and left, and in his frenzy hurt others and received hurt himself; indeed, the second act of the piece was brought, through him, to a very perplexed termination.

Here was an opportunity, which I could not allow to pass, for chastising the piratical publisher Macklot. He is introduced going about hawking his Macklot wares; and, when he hears of the preparation for the wedding, he cannot resist the impulse to go sponging for a dinner, and to stuff his ravening maw at other people's expense. He announces himself: Kilian Brustfleck inquires into his claims, but is obliged to refuse him, since it was an understanding that all the guests should be well-known public characters, to which recommendation the applicant can make no claim. Macklot does his best to show that he is as renowned as any of them. But when Kilian Brustfleck, as a strict master of ceremonies, shows himself immovable, the nameless person, who has recovered from his Berserker-rage at the end of the second act, espouses the cause of his near relative, the book-pirate, so urgently, that the latter is finally admitted among the guests.

About this time the Counts Stolberg arrived at Frankfort: they were on a journey to Switzerland, and wished to make us a visit. The earliest productions of my dawning talent, which appeared in the *Göttingen Musenalmanach*, had led to my forming a friendly relation with them, and with all those other young men whose characters and labours are now well known. At that time rather strange ideas were entertained of friendship and love. They applied themselves

to nothing more, properly speaking, than a certain vivacity of youth, which led to a mutual association and to an interchange of minds, full indeed of talent, but nevertheless uncultivated. Such a mutual relation, which looked indeed like confidence, was mistaken for love, for genuine inclination: I deceived myself in this as well as others, and have, in more than one way, suffered from it many years. There is still in existence a letter of Bürger's belonging to that time, from which it may be seen, that, among these companions, there was no question about the moral æsthetic. Every one felt himself excited, and thought that he might act and poetise accordingly.

The brothers arrived, bringing Count Haugwitz with them. They were received by me with open heart, with kindly propriety. They lodged at the hotel, but were generally with us at dinner. The first joyous meeting proved highly gratifying, but troublesome eccentricities soon manifested themselves.

A singular position arose for my mother. In her ready, frank way, she could carry herself back to the Middle Ages at once, and take the part of Aja with some Lombard or Byzantine princess. They called her nothing else than Tian Aja, and she was pleased with the joke; entering the more heartily into the fantasies of youth, as she believed she saw her own portrait in the lady of Götz von Berlichingen.

But this could not last long. We had dined together but a few times, when once, after enjoying glass after glass, our poetic hatred for tyrants showed itself; and we avowed a thirst for the blood of such villains. My father smiled, and shook his head: my mother had scarcely heard of a tyrant in her life; however, she recollected having seen the copperplate engraving of such a monster in Gottfried's Chronicles, viz., King Cambyzes, whom he describes as having shot with an arrow the little son of an enemy through the heart,

and boasting of his deed to the father's face: this still stood in her memory. To give a cheerful turn to the conversation, which continually grew more violent, she betook herself to her cellar, where her oldest wines lay carefully preserved in large casks. There she had in store no less treasure than the vintages of 1706, '19, '26, and '48, all under her own especial watch and ward, which were seldom broached except on solemn festive occasions.

As she set before us the rich-coloured wine in the polished decanter, she exclaimed, "Here is the true tyrant's blood! Glut yourselves with this, but let all murderous thoughts go out of my house!"

"Yes, tyrant's blood indeed!" I cried: "there is no greater tyrant than the one whose heart's blood is here set before you. Regale yourselves with it, but use moderation; for beware lest he subdue you by his spirit and agreeable taste! The vine is the universal tyrant, who ought to be rooted up: let us therefore choose and reverence as our patron saint the holy Lycurgus, the Thracian; he set about the pious work in earnest; and, though at last blinded and corrupted by the infatuating demon Bacchus, he yet deserves to stand high in the army of martyrs above.

"This vine is the very vilest tyrant, at once an oppressor, a flatterer, and a hypocrite. The first draughts of his blood are sweetly relishing, but one drop incessantly entices another after it: they succeed each other like a necklace of pearls, which one fears to pull apart."

If I should be suspected here of substituting, as the best historians have done, a fictitious speech for the actual address, I can only express my regret that no shorthand writer had taken down this peroration at once, and handed it down to us. The thoughts would be found the same, but the flow of the language perhaps more graceful and attractive. Above all, however, in the present sketch, as a whole, there is a want

of that diffuse eloquence and fulness of youth, which feels itself, and knows not whither its strength and faculty will carry it.

In a city like Frankfort, one is placed in a strange position: strangers, continually crossing each other, point to every region of the globe, and awaken a passion for travelling. On many an occasion before now I had shown an inclination to be moving; and now at the very moment when the great point was, to make an experiment whether I could renounce Lilli — when a certain painful disquiet unfitted me for all regular business, the proposition of the Stolbergs, that I should accompany them to Switzerland, was welcome. Stimulated, moreover, by the exhortations of my father, who looked with pleasure on the idea of my travelling in that direction, and who advised me not to omit to pass over into Italy if a suitable occasion should offer itself, I at once decided to go, and soon had everything packed for the journey. With some intimation, but without leave-taking, I separated myself from Lilli: she had so grown into my heart, that I did not believe it possible to part myself from her.

In a few hours I found myself with my merry fellow travellers in Darmstadt. Even at court we should not always act with perfect propriety: here Count Haugwitz took the lead. He was the youngest of us all, well formed, of a delicate but noble appearance, with soft, friendly features, of an equable disposition, sympathising enough, but with so much moderation, that, contrasted with us, he appeared quite impassible. Consequently, he had to put up with all sorts of jibes and nicknames from them. This was all very well, so long as they believed that they might act like children of nature; but as soon as occasion called for propriety, and when one was again obliged, not unwillingly, to put on the reserve of a count, then he knew how to introduce and to smooth over everything; so that

we always came off with tolerable credit, if not with *éclat*.

I spent my time, meanwhile, with Merck, who, in his Mephistopheles manner, looked upon my intended journey with an evil eye, and described my companions, who had also paid him a visit, with a discrimination that listened not to any suggestions of mercy. In his way he knew me thoroughly; the *naïve* and indomitable good nature of my character was painful to him; the everlasting purpose to take things as they are, the live and let live, was his detestation. "It is a foolish trick," he said, "your going with these Burschen;" and then he would describe them aptly, but not altogether justly. Throughout there was a want of good feeling, and here I could believe that I could see farther than he did; although I did not in fact do this, but only knew how to appreciate those ideas of their character which lay beyond the circle of his vision.

"You will not stay long with them!" was the close of all his remarks. On this occasion I remember a remarkable saying of his, which he repeated to me at a later time, which I had often repeated to myself, and frequently found confirmed in life. "Thy striving," said he, "thy unswerving effort is, to give a poetic form to the real: others seek to give reality to the so-called poetic, to the imaginative; and of that nothing will ever come but stupid stuff." Whoever apprehends the immense difference between these two modes of action, whoever insists and acts upon this conviction, has reached the solution of a thousand other things.

Unluckily, before our party left Darmstadt, an incident happened which tended to verify beyond dispute the opinion of Merck.

Among the extravaganzas which grew out of the notion that we should try to transport ourselves into a state of nature, was that of bathing in public waters in the open air; and our friends, after violating every

other law of propriety, could not forego this additional unseemliness. Darmstadt, situated on a sandy plain, without running water, had, it appeared, a pond in the neighbourhood, of which I only heard on this occasion. My friends, who were hot by nature, and moreover kept continually heating themselves, sought refreshment in this pond. The sight of naked youths in the clear sunshine might well seem something strange in this region: at all events scandal arose. Merck sharpened his conclusions, and I do not deny that I was glad to hasten our departure.

Already on the way to Mannheim; in spite of all good and noble feelings which we entertained in common, a certain difference in sentiment and conduct exhibited itself. Leopold Stolberg told us, with much of feeling and passion, that he had been forced to renounce a sincere attachment to a beautiful English lady, and on that account had undertaken so long a journey. When he received in return the sympathising confession that we, too, were not strangers to such experiences, then he gave vent without respect to the feelings of youth, declaring that nothing in the world could be compared with his passion, his sufferings, or with the beauty and amiability of his beloved. If by moderate observations we tried, as is proper among good companions, to bring him duly to qualify his assertion, it only made matters worse; and Count Haugwitz, as well as I, were inclined at last to let the matter drop. When we had reached Mannheim, we occupied pleasant chambers in a respectable hotel; and after our first dinner there, during the dessert, at which the wine was not spared, Leopold challenged us to drink to the health of his fair one, which was done noisily enough. The glasses having been drained, he cried out, "But now, out of goblets thus consecrated, no more drinking must be permitted; a second health would be a profanation; therefore, let us annihilate

these vessels!" and with these words he dashed the wine-glass against the wall behind him. The rest of us followed his example; and I imagined, at the moment, that Merck pulled me by the collar.

But youth still retains this trait of childhood, that it harbours no malice against good companions; that its unsophisticated good nature may be brushed somewhat roughly indeed, to be sure, but cannot be permanently injured.

The glasses thus proclaimed angelical had considerably swelled our reckoning: comforting ourselves, however, and determined to be merry, we hastened for Carlsruhe, there to enter a new circle, with all the confidence of youth and its freedom from care. There we found Klopstock, who still maintained, with dignity, his ancient authority over disciples who held him in reverence. I also gladly did homage to him; so that, when bidden to his court with the others, I probably conducted myself tolerably well for a novice. One felt too, in a certain manner, called upon to be natural and sensible at the same time.

The reigning margrave, highly honoured among the German sovereigns as one of their princely seniors, but more especially on account of the excellent aims of his government, was glad to converse about matters of political economy. The margravine, active and well versed in the arts and various useful branches of knowledge, was also pleased by some graceful speeches to manifest a certain sympathy for us, for which we were duly grateful, though when at home we could not refrain from venting some severe remarks upon her miserable paper-manufactory, and the favour she showed to the piratical bookseller Macklot.

The circumstance, however, of importance for me, was, that the young duke of Saxe-Weimar had arrived here to enter into a formal matrimonial engagement with his noble bride, the Princess Louisa of Hesse-

Darmstadt: President von Möser had already arrived on the same business, in order to settle this important contract with the court-tutor, Count Görtz, and fully to ratify it. My conversations with both the high personages were most friendly; and, at the farewell audience, they both made me repeated assurances that it would be pleasant to them to see me at Weimar.

Some private conversations with Klopstock won me by the friendliness they showed, and led me to use openness and candour with him. I communicated to him the latest scenes of "Faust," which he seemed to approve of. Indeed, as I afterward learned, he had spoken of them to others with marked commendation, a thing not usual with him, and expressed a wish to see the conclusion of the piece.

Our former rudeness, though sometimes, as we called it, our genius-like demeanour, was kept in something like a chaste restraint in Carlsruhe, which is decent and almost holy ground. I parted from my companions, as I had resolved to take a wide round and go to Emmendingen, where my brother-in-law was high bailiff. I looked upon this visit to my sister as a real trial. I knew that her married life was unhappy; while there was no cause to find fault with her, with her husband, or with circumstances. She was of a peculiar nature, of which it is difficult to speak: we will endeavour, however, to set down here whatever admits of being described.

A fine form was in her favour; but not so her features, which, although expressing, clearly enough, goodness, intelligence, and sensibility, were nevertheless wanting in regularity and grace.

Add to this, that a high and strongly arched forehead, exposed still more by the abominable fashion of dressing the hair back on the head, contributed to leave a certain unpleasant impression, although it bore the best testimony to her moral and intellectual quali-

ties. I can fancy, that if, after the modern fashion, she had surrounded the upper part of her face with curls, and clothed her temples and cheeks with ringlets, she would have found herself more agreeable before the mirror, without fear of displeasing others as well as herself. Then, there was the grave fault, that her skin was seldom clean, an evil which from her youth up, by some demoniacal fatality, was most sure to show itself on all festal occasions, and at concerts, balls, and other parties.

In spite of these drawbacks, she gradually made her way, however, as her better and nobler qualities showed themselves more distinctly.

A firm character not easily controlled, a soul that sympathised and needed sympathy, a highly cultivated mind, fine acquirements and talents, some knowledge of languages and a ready pen,—all these she possessed; so that, if she had been more richly favoured with outward charms, she would have been among the women most sought after in her day.

Besides all this, there is one strange thing to be mentioned: there was not the slightest touch of sensual passion in her nature. She had grown up with me, and had no other wish than to continue and pass her life in this fraternal union. Since my return from the academy we had been inseparable: with the most unreserved confidence we shared all our thoughts, feelings, and humours, and even the most incidental and passing impressions of every accidental circumstance. When I went to Wetzlar, the loneliness of the house without me seemed insupportable: my friend Schlosser, neither unknown nor repugnant to the good girl, stepped into my place. In him, unfortunately, the brotherly affection changed into a decided, and, to judge from his strictly conscientious character, probably a first, passion. Here there was found what people call as good a match as could be wished; and my

sister, after having steadfastly rejected several good offers, but from insignificant men, whom she always had an aversion to, allowed herself to be, I may well say, talked into accepting him.

I must frankly confess that I have frequently indulged in fancies about my sister's destiny : I did not like to think of her as the mistress of a family, but rather as an abbess, as the lady superior of some noble community. She possessed every requisite for such a high position, while she was wanting in all that the world deems indispensable in its members. Over feminine souls she always exercised an irresistible influence : young minds were gently attracted toward her, and she ruled them by the spirit of her inward superiority. As she had in common with me a universal tolerance for the good, the human, with all its eccentricities, provided they did not amount to perversity, there was no need for seeking to conceal from her any idiosyncrasy which might mark any remarkable natural talents, or for its owner feeling any constraint in her presence : hence our parties, as we have seen before, were always varied, free, ingenuous, and sometimes, perhaps, bordering on boldness. My habit of forming intimacies of a respectful and obliging nature with young ladies, without any closer engagement or relations being the result, was mainly owing to my sister's influence over me. And now the sagacious reader, who is capable of reading into these lines what does not stand written in them, but is nevertheless implied, will be able to form some conception of the serious feelings with which I then set foot in Emmendingen.

But at my departure, after a short visit, a heavier load lay on my heart ; for my sister had earnestly recommended, not to say enjoined, me, to break off my connection with Lilli. She herself had suffered much from a long-protracted engagement : Schlosser, with his spirit of rectitude, did not betroth himself to her

until he was sure of his appointment under the Grand Duke of Baden, — indeed, if one would take it so, until he was actually appointed. The answer to his application, however, was delayed in an incredible manner. If I may express my conjecture on the matter, the brave Schlosser, able man of business as he was, was nevertheless, on account of his downright integrity, desirable neither to the prince as a servant, immediately in contact with himself, nor to the minister, who still less liked to have so honest a coadjutor near to him. His expected and earnestly desired appointment at Carlsruhe was never filled up. But the delay was explained to me when the place of upper bailiff in Emmendingen became vacant and he was instantly selected for it. Thus an office of much dignity and profit was now entrusted to him, for which he had shown himself fully competent. It seemed entirely suited to his taste, his mode of action, to stand here alone, to act according to his own conviction, and to be held responsible for everything, whether for praise or blame.

As no objections could be raised to his accepting this place, my sister had to follow him, not indeed to a court-residence, as she had hoped, but to a place which must have seemed to her a solitude, a desert; to a dwelling, spacious to be sure, with an official dignity, and stately, but destitute of all chance of society. Some young ladies, with whom she had cultivated an early friendship, followed her there: and, as the Gerock family was blessed with many daughters, these contrived to stay with her in turn; so that, in the midst of such privation, she always enjoyed the presence of at least one long-trusted friend.

These circumstances, these experiences, made her feel justified in recommending to me, most earnestly, a separation from Lilli. She thought it hard to take such a young lady (of whom she had formed the

highest opinion) out of the midst of a lively, if not splendid, circle, and to shut her up in our old house, which, although very passable in its way, was not suited for the reception of distinguished society, sticking her, as it were, between a well-disposed, but unsociable, precise, and formal, father, and a mother extremely active in her domestic matters, who, after the household business of the day was over, would not like to be disturbed over some notable bit of work by a friendly conversation with forward and refined young girls. On the other hand, she in a lively manner set Lilli's position before me; for partly in my letters, partly in a confidential but impassioned conversation, I had told her everything to a hair.

Unfortunately her description was only a circumstantial and well-meant completion of what a gossiping friend, in whom, by degrees, all confidence ceased to be placed, had contrived, by mentioning a few characteristic traits, to insinuate into her mind.

I could promise her nothing, although I was obliged to confess that she had convinced me. I went on with that enigmatic feeling in my heart, with which passion always nourishes itself; for the child Cupid clings obstinately to the garment of Hope, even when she is preparing with long steps to flee away.

The only thing between this place and Zurich which I now clearly remember is the falls of the Rhine at Schaffhausen. A mighty cascade here gives the indication of the mountainous region which we designed to enter, where, each step becoming steeper and more difficult, we should have laboriously to clamber up the heights.

The view of the lake of Zurich, which we enjoyed from the gate of the "*Sword*," is still before me: I say from the gate of the tavern; for, without stopping to enter it, I hastened to Lavater. He gave me a cheerful and hearty reception, and was, I must confess,

extremely gracious: confiding, considerate, kind, and elevating was his bearing; indeed, it would be impossible to expect anything else of him. His wife, with somewhat singular, but serene, tenderly pious, expression of countenance, fully harmonised, like everything else about him, with his way of thinking and living.

Our first and perhaps only theme of conversation was his system of physiognomy. The first part of this remarkable work was, if I mistake not, already printed, or at least near its completion. It might be said to be at once stamped with genius, and yet empirical; methodical, but still in its instances incomplete and partial. I was strangely connected with it: Lavater wanted all the world for coöperators and sympathisers. During his travels up the Rhine, he had portraits taken of a great many distinguished men, in order to excite their personal interest in a work in which they were to appear. He proceeded in the same way with artists: he called upon every one to send him drawings for illustrations. The latter came, and many were not exactly suited for his purpose. So, too, he had copperplates engraved in all parts, which seldom turned out characteristic copies. Much labour had been bestowed on his part: with money and exertions of all kinds, an important work was now ready, and full honour was done to physiognomy. But when in a great volume, illustrated by examples, physiognomy, founded on doctrine, was to set up its claims to the dignity of science, it was found that not a single picture said what it ought to say: all the plates had to be censured or to be taken with exceptions, none to be praised, but only tolerated; many, indeed, were quite altered by the explanations. For me, who in all my studies sought a firm footing before I went farther, I had now to perform one of the most painful tasks which industry could be set to. Let the reader judge. The manuscript, with impressions of the plates in-

served, was sent to me at Frankfort. I was authorised to strike out whatever displeased me, to change and put in what I liked. However, I made a very moderate use of this liberty. In one instance he had introduced a long and violent piece of controversy against an unjust orator, which I left out, and substituted a cheerful poem about nature; for this he scolded me, but afterward, when he had cooled down, approved of what I had done.

Whoever turns over the four volumes of physiognomy, and (what he will not repent of) reads them, may conceive the interest there was in our interviews, during which, as most of the plates contained in it were already drawn, and part of them had been engraved, we examined, and decided on those fit to be inserted in the work, and considered the ingenious means by which those, which did not exactly tally with its principles, might be made instructive and suitable.

Whenever at present I look through the work of Lavater, a comic, merry feeling comes over me: it seems as if I saw before me the shadows of men formerly known to me, over whom I once fretted, and in whom I find little satisfaction now.

The possibility, however, of retaining, in some sort, much that otherwise would have been unsuitable, was owing to the fine and decided talent of the sketcher and engraver, Lips. He was, in fact, born for the free prosaic representation of the actual, which was precisely the thing wanted in this case. He worked under a singularly exacting physiognomist, and therefore was obliged to look sharp to approximate to the demands of his master: the clever peasant boy felt the whole responsibility of working for a clerical gentleman from a city so highly privileged, and gave his best care to the business.

Living in a separate house from my companions, I

became every day more of a stranger to them, without the least unpleasant feeling having arisen: our rural excursions were no longer made together, although in the city we still kept up some intercourse. With all the arrogance of young counts, they had honoured Lavater with a visit, and appeared to the skilful physiognomist somewhat different from what they did to the rest of the world. He spoke to me about them; and I remember quite well, that, speaking of Leopold Stolberg, he exclaimed, "I know not what you all mean: he is a noble, excellent youth, and full of talent; but you have described him to me as a hero, as a Hercules; and I have never in my life seen a softer and more sensitive young man, nor, if need be, one more easily influenced. I am still far from having formed a clear physiognomical judgment of him; but as for you and all the rest, you are in a fog altogether."

Since Lavater's journey on the Lower Rhine, the public interest in him and his physiognomical studies had greatly increased: visitors of all sorts crowded upon him; so that he felt in some sort embarrassed at being looked upon as the first of spiritual and intellectual men, and the chief point of attraction for strangers. Hence, to avoid envy and all unpleasant feelings, he managed to remind and warn his visitors that they must treat other distinguished men with friendship and respect.

In this, especial regard was had to the aged Bodmer; and, accordingly, we were compelled to visit him and pay our youthful respects to him. He lived on a hill, above the large or old town, which lay on the right bank, where the lake contracts its waters into the Limmat. We crossed the old town, and, by a path that became steeper and steeper, at last ascended the height behind the walls, where, between the fortifications and the old wall, a pleasant suburb had sprung

up, partly in continuous and partly in detached houses, with a half-country look. The house where Bodmer had passed his whole life stood in the midst of an open and cheerful neighbourhood, which, the day being beautiful and clear, we often paused on our road to survey with the greatest pleasure.

We were conducted up a flight of steps into a wainscoted chamber, where a brisk old man, of middle stature, came to meet us. He received us with the greeting he usually addressed to young visitors, telling us that we must consider it an act of courtesy on his part to have delayed so long his departure from this world, in order that he might receive us kindly, form our acquaintance, refresh himself with our talents, and wish us joy in our future career.

We, on the other hand, congratulated him, that as a poet, belonging to the patriarchal world, he had yet, in the neighbourhood of the most highly cultivated city, possessed during his whole life a truly idyllic dwelling, and, in the high, free air, had enjoyed for so many long years such a wide and beautiful prospect to feed his eyes with unfading delight.

It seemed anything but displeasing to the old man when we asked permission to take a view from his window of the neighbouring scenery; and truly the prospect in the cheerful sunshine, and in the best season of the year, appeared quite incomparable. The prospect commanded much of the slope, from the great town down to the water's edge, as well as the smaller town across the Limmat, and the whole of the fertile Sihl-feld, toward the west. Behind us, on the left, was a part of the lake of Zurich, with its bright, rippled surface, and its shores endlessly varying with alternating hill and valley and height after height in greater variety than the eye could take in, which, dazzled by this splendour, delighted to rest on the blue range of the loftier mountains in the distance,

whose snowy summits man has been so far intimate with as to give names to.

The rapture of young men at sight of the marvellous beauty, which, for so many years, had daily been before him, appeared to please the old poet; he became, so to speak, ironically sympathising: and we parted the best of friends, but not before a yearning for those blue mountain heights had taken possession of our souls.

Now that I am on the point of leaving our worthy patriarch, I remark, for the first time, that I have as yet said nothing of his form and countenance, of his movements, and his carriage and bearing.

In general, I do not think it quite right for travellers to describe every distinguished man whom they visit, as if they wanted to furnish materials for advertising a runaway. No one sufficiently considers that he has only looked at the great man during the moment of introduction, and then only in his own way; and that, according to the circumstances of the moment, the host may or not be what he seemed, proud or meek, silent or talkative, cheerful or morose. In this particular case, however, I may excuse myself from the attempt, by saying that no verbal description of Bodmer's venerable person would convey an adequate impression. Fortunately, there exists a picture of him by Count von Bause, which perfectly represents the man as he appeared to us, and, indeed, exactly preserves his peculiar penetrating and reflective look.

A great, not indeed unexpected, but still highly coveted, gratification awaited me in Zurich, where I met my young friend Passavant. Of a respectable family of the Reformed persuasion, and born in my native city, he lived in Switzerland, at the fountain-head of the doctrine which he was afterward to proclaim as a preacher. With a frame not large, but active, his face and his whole manner promised a quick

and agreeable resoluteness of character. His hair and beard were black, his eyes lively. On the whole, you saw in him a man of some sensitiveness, but of moderate energy.

Scarcely had we embraced one another, and exchanged the first greeting, when he immediately proposed to me to visit the smaller cantons. Having himself already walked through them with great delight, he wished, with the sight of them, to awaken my rapture and enthusiasm.

While I was talking over, with Lavater, the most interesting and important points of our common business, until we had nearly exhausted them, my lively fellow travellers had already sallied forth in various directions, and, in their own fashion, had examined the country. Passavant, receiving and welcoming me with hearty friendship, believed that he had gained thereby a right to the exclusive possession of my society, and therefore, in the absence of my companions, contrived to entice me to the mountains, the more easily, since I was decidedly inclined to accomplish the long-desired ramble in quiet, and at liberty to follow my own whims. Without further deliberation, therefore, we stepped into a boat, and sailed up the glorious lake on a fine clear morning.

A poem inserted here may give the reader some intimation of those happy moments :

And here I drink new blood, fresh food,
 From world so free, so blest :
 How sweet is Nature, and how good,
 Who holds me to her breast !
 The waves are cradling up our boat,
 The oars are beating time ;
 Mountains we meet that seem afloat
 In heavenly clouds sublime.

Why, my eye, art downward turning?
 Golden dreams, are ye returning?

Dream, though gold, I thee repel :
Love and life here also dwell.

'Neath the wave are sinking
Stars from heaven sparkling ;
Soft white mists are drinking
Distance towering, darkling ;
Morning wind is fanning
Trees, by the bay that root ;
And its image scanning
Is the ripening fruit.

— *Editor's Version.*

We landed in Richterswyl, where we had an introduction from Lavater to Doctor Hotze. As a physician, and a highly intelligent and benevolent man, he enjoyed great esteem in his immediate neighbourhood and in the whole country ; and we can do no better honour to his memory than by referring to a passage in Lavater's " Physiognomy," which describes him.

After a very hospitable entertainment, which he relieved with a highly agreeable and instructive conversation, describing to us the next halting-places in our journey, we ascended the mountains which lay before us. When we were about to descend again into the vale of Schindellegi, we turned round to take in once more the charming prospect over the lake of Zurich.

Of my feelings at that moment some idea may be gathered from the following lines, which, just as I wrote them down, are still preserved in a little memorandum-book :

If I, dearest Lilli, did not love thee,
What delight I should have in this view !
And yet were I, Lilli, not to love thee,
Could here, could true bliss to me accrue ?

— *Editor's Version.*

This little impromptu reads to me more expressive in its present context than as it stands by itself in the printed collection of my poems.

The rough roads which led to St. Mary's hermitage did not wear out our good spirits. A number of pilgrims, whom we had remarked below upon the lake, now overtook us, and asked the aid of our prayers in behalf of their pious object. We saluted them, and let them pass; and, as they moved regularly with their hymns and prayers, they lent a characteristic graceful animation to the dreary heights. We saw livingly marked out the serpentine path which we, too, had to travel, and seemed to be joyously following. The customs of the Romish Church are altogether significant and imposing to the Protestant, inasmuch as he only recognises the inmost principle by which they were first called forth, the human element by which they are propagated from race to race; thus penetrating at once to the kernel, without troubling himself, just at the moment, with the shell, the rind, or even with the tree itself, its twigs, leaves, bark, and roots.

We now saw rising a dreary, treeless vale, the splendid church, the cloister, of broad and stately compass, in the midst of a neat place of sojourn for a large and varied assembly of guests.

The little church within the church, the former hermitage of the saint, encrusted with marble, and transformed as far as possible into a regular chapel, was something new to me, something that I had not seen, — this little vessel, surrounded and built over with pillars and vaults. It could not but excite sober thoughts to reflect how a single spark of goodness, and of the fear of God, had here kindled a bright and burning flame, so that troops of believers never ceased to make painful pilgrimages in order to light their little tapers at this holy fire. However the fact is to be explained, it plainly points at least to an unbounded craving in man for equal light, for equal warmth, with that which this old hermit cherished and enjoyed in the deepest feeling and the most secure conviction.

We were shown into the treasure-chamber, which was rich and imposing enough, and offered to the astonished eye busts of the size of life, not to say colossal, of the saints and founders of different orders.

A very different sort of feeling was awakened at the sight of a closet opening upon this. It was filled with antique valuables, here dedicated and honoured. My attention was fixed by various golden crowns of remarkable workmanship, out of which I contemplated one exclusively. It was a pointed crown in the style of former days, such as one may have seen in pictures on the heads of ancient queens, but of a most tasteful design and of highly elaborate execution. The coloured stones with which it was studded were distributed over it or set opposite to each other with great effect and judgment: it was, in short, a work of that kind which one would pronounce perfect at the first glance, without waiting to bring out this impression by an appeal to the laws of art.

In such cases, where the art is not recognised, but felt, heart and soul are turned toward the object: one would like to possess the jewel, that one might impart pleasure to others with such a gift. I begged permission to handle the little crown; and, as I held it up respectfully in my hand, I could not help thinking that I should like to press it upon the bright, glittering locks of Lilli, lead her before the mirror, and witness her own joy in it, and the happiness which she spread around her. I have often thought since, that this scene, if realised by a skilful painter, would be highly touching and full of meaning. It were worth one's while to be the young king to receive a bride and a new kingdom in this way.

In order to show us all the treasures of the cloister, they led us into a cabinet of natural and artificial curiosities. I had then but little idea of the value of such things: at that time geognosy, which is so com-

mendable in itself, but which fritters away the impression produced by the earth's beautiful surface on the mind's eye, had not begun to entice me, still less had a fantastic geology entangled me in its labyrinths. Nevertheless, the monk who acted as our guide compelled me to bestow some attention on a fossil, much prized as he said by connoisseurs, — a small wild-boar's head well preserved in a lump of blue fuller's clay, which, black as it was, has dwelt in my imagination ever since. They had found it in the country of Rapperswyl, a district which, ever since the memory of man, was so full of morasses that it could well receive and keep such mummies for posterity.

Far different attractions were presented to me by a copperplate engraving of Martin Schön, which was kept under a glass frame, and represented the Assumption of the Virgin. True, only a perfect specimen could give an idea of the art of such a master; but then, we are so affected by it, as with the perfect in every branch of art, that we cannot get rid of the wish to possess something in some way like it, to be able constantly to repeat the sight of it, however long a time may intervene. Why should I not anticipate and confess here, that afterward I could not rest until I had succeeded in obtaining an excellent copy of this plate.

On the 16th of July, 1775 (for here I find a date first set down), we entered upon a toilsome journey; wild, stony heights were to be surmounted, and that, too, in a perfect solitude and wilderness. At a quarter before eight in the evening, we stood before the Schwyzer-Haken, two mountain peaks which jut out boldly, side by side, into the sky. For the first time we found snow upon our path, where on the jagged rocks it had been hanging since the winter. A primeval forest, with its solemn awe, filled the immense valleys into which we were about to descend. Re-

freshed, after a short rest, we sprang, with bold and light step, from cliff to cliff, from ledge to ledge, down the precipitous foot-path, and arrived by ten o'clock at Schwyz. We had become at once weary yet cheerful, exhausted yet excited: we eagerly quenched our violent thirst, and felt ourselves still more inspired. Imagine the young man who but two years before had written "Werther," and his still younger friend who still earlier had read that remarkable work in manuscript, and had been strangely excited by it, transported, in some respect without their knowing it or wishing it, into a state of nature, and there, in the consciousness of rich powers, vividly recalling past passions, clinging to those of the present, shaping fruitless plans, rioting through the realm of fancy, and you will be able to form some conception of our situation then, which I should not know how to describe if it did not stand written in my journal, "Laughing and shouting lasted until midnight."

On the morning of the 17th we saw the Schwyzer-Haken from our windows. Around these vast and irregular natural pyramids, clouds rose upon clouds. At one in the afternoon we left Schwyz, on our way to the Rigi: at two we were on the Lawerzer lake, the sun shining brilliantly on it and on us all the while. For sheer delight we saw nothing. Two stout maidens guided the boat: that looked pretty, and we made no objection. We arrived upon the island, on which they say once lived the former lord of the castle: be this as it may, the hut of the anchorite has now planted itself amidst the ruins.

We climbed the Rigi; at half-past seven we stood at the foot of the "Mother of God" covered in snow; then passed the chapel and the nunnery, and rested at the hotel of the Ox.

On the 18th, Sunday morning early, we took a sketch of the chapel from the Ox. At twelve we

went to Kaltenbad, or the fountain of the Three Sisters. By a quarter after two we had reached the summit: we found ourselves in the clouds, this time doubly disagreeable to us, since they both hindered the prospect and drenched us with mist. But when, here and there, they opened and showed us, framed as it were by their ever-varying outline, a clear, majestic, sun-lit world, with the changing scenes of a diorama, we no longer lamented these accidents; for it was a sight we had never seen before and should never behold again: and we lingered long in this somewhat inconvenient position, to catch, through the chinks and crevices of the ever-shifting masses of cloud, some little point of sunny earth, some little strip of shore, or pretty nook of the lake.

By eight in the evening we were back again at the door of the inn, and refreshed ourselves with baked fish and eggs, and plenty of wine.

As the twilight and the night gradually came on, our ears were filled with mysteriously harmonising sounds, — the tinkling of the chapel bells, the splashing of the fountain, the rustling of changeful breezes, with the horns of the foresters in the distance: these were blest, soothing, tranquillising moments.

At half-past six, on the morning of the 19th, first ascending, then going down by the Waldstätter Lake, we came to Fitznau; from thence, by water, to Gersau. At noon we were in the hotel on the lake. About two o'clock we were opposite to Grutli, where the three Tells conspired; then upon the flat rock where the hero sprang from his boat, and where the legend of his life and deeds is recorded and immortalised by a painting. At three we were at Flüelen, where he embarked; and at four in Altorf, where he shot the apple.

Aided by this poetic thread, one winds conveniently through the labyrinth of these rocky walls, which, de-

scending perpendicularly to the water, stand silently before us. They, the immovable, stand there as quietly as the side-scenes of a theatre: success or failure, joy or sorrow, merely pertain to the persons who, for the day successively strut upon the stage.

Such reflections, however, were wholly out of the circle of the vision of the youths who then looked upon them: what had recently passed had been dismissed from their thoughts, and the future lay before them as strangely inscrutable as the mountain region which they were laboriously penetrating.

On the 20th we breakfasted at Amstäg, where they cooked us a savoury dinner of baked fish. Here now, on this mountain ledge, where the Reuss, which was at all times wild enough, was rushing from rugged clefts, and dashing the cool snow-water over the rocky channels, I could not help enjoying the longed-for opportunity, and refreshing myself in the foaming waves.

At three o'clock we proceeded onward: a row of sumpter-horses went before us; we marched with them over a broad mass of snow, and did not learn till afterward that it was hollow underneath. The snows of winter, that had deposited themselves here in a mountain gorge, which at other seasons it was necessary to skirt circuitously, now furnished us with a shorter and more direct road. But the waters which forced their way beneath had gradually undermined the snowy mass, and the mild summer had melted more and more of the lower side of the vault; so that now, like a broad, arched bridge, it formed a natural connection between the opposite sides. We convinced ourselves of this strange freak of nature by venturing more than half-way down into the broader part of the gorge. As we kept ascending, we left pine forests in the chasm, through which the Reuss from time to time appeared, foaming and dashing over rocky precipices.

At half-past seven we arrived at Wasen, where, to

render palatable the red, heavy, sour Lombardy wine, we were forced to have recourse to water, and to supply, by a great deal of sugar, the ingredient which nature had refused to elaborate in the grape. The landlord showed us some beautiful crystals; but I had at that time so little interest in the study of nature and such specimens, that I did not care to burden myself with these mountain products, however cheaply they might be bought.

On the 21st, at half-past six, we were still ascending; the rocks grew more and more stupendous and awful; the path to the *Teufelstein* (Devil's Stone), from which we were to gain a view of the Devil's Bridge, was still more difficult. My companion, being disposed for a rest, proposed to me to sketch the most important views. My outlines were, perhaps, tolerably successful: but nothing seemed to stand out, nothing to retire into the distance; for such objects I had no language. We toiled on farther: the horrors of the wilderness seemed continually to deepen, plains became hills and hollows chasms. And so my guide conducted me to the cave of Ursern, through which I walked in somewhat of an ill humour: what we had seen thus far was, at any rate, sublime; this darkness took everything away.

But the roguish guide anticipated the joyful astonishment which would overwhelm me on my egress. There the moderately foaming stream wound mildly through a level vale surrounded by mountains, but wide enough to invite habitation. Above the clean little village of Ursern and its church, which stood opposite to us on a level plot, rose a pine grove, which was held sacred because it protected the inhabitants at its foot from the rolling of the avalanches. Here we enjoyed the sight of long-missed vegetation. The meadows of the valley, just beginning to look green, were adorned along the river side with short willows. The

tranquillity was great: upon the level paths we felt our powers revive again, and my fellow traveller was not a little proud of the surprise which he had so skillfully contrived.

The meadows produce the celebrated Ursern cheese; and the youthful travellers, high in spirits, pronounced very tolerable wine not to be surpassed, in order to heighten their enjoyment, and to give a more fantastic impulse to their projects.

On the 22d, at half-past three, we left our quarters, that from the smooth Ursern valley we might enter upon the stony valley of Liviner. Here, too, we at once missed all vegetation: nothing was to be seen or heard but naked or mossy rocks covered with snow, fitful gusts blowing the clouds backwards and forwards, the rustling of waterfalls, the tinkling of sumpter-horses in the depth of solitude, where we saw none coming and none departing. It did not cost the imagination much to see dragons' nests in the clefts. But, nevertheless, we felt inspired and elevated by one of the most beautiful and picturesque waterfalls, sublimely various in all its rocky steps, which, being at this time of the year enriched by melted snows, and now half hidden by the clouds, now half revealed, chained us for some time to the spot.

Finally, we came to little mist-lakes, as I might call them, since they were scarcely to be distinguished from the atmospheric streaks. Before long, a building loomed toward us out of the vapour: it was the Hospice, and we felt great satisfaction at the thoughts of sheltering ourselves under its hospitable roof.

NINETEENTH BOOK.

ANNOUNCED by the low barking of a little dog which ran out to meet us, we were cordially received at the door by an elderly but active female. She apologised for the absence of the Pater, who had gone to Milan, but was expected home that evening; and immediately, without any more words, set to work to provide for our comfort and wants. We were shown into a warm and spacious room, where bread, cheese, and some passable wine, were set before us, with the promise of a more substantial meal for our supper. The surprise of the day was now talked over; and my friend was not a little proud that all had gone off so well, and that we had passed a day the impressions of which neither poetry nor prose could ever reproduce.

At length with the twilight, which did not here come on till late, the venerable father entered the room, greeted his guests with dignity but in a friendly and cordial manner, and in a few words ordered the cook to pay all possible attention to our wishes. When we expressed the wonder we could not repress, that he could like to pass his life up here, in the midst of such a perfect wilderness, out of the reach of all society, he assured us that society was never wanting, as our own welcome visit might testify. A lively trade, he told us was, kept up between Italy and Germany. This continual traffic brought him into relation with the first mercantile houses. He often went down to Milan, and also to Lucerne, though not so frequently, from which place, however, the houses which had charge of the posting on the main route frequently sent young people to him, who, here at the point of passage

between the two countries, required to be made acquainted with all the circumstances and events connected with such affairs.

Amid such varied conversation the evening passed away; and we slept a quiet night on somewhat short sleeping-places, fastened to the wall, and more like shelves than bedsteads.

Rising early, I soon found myself under the open sky, but in a narrow space surrounded by tall mountain tops. I sat down upon the foot-path which led to Italy, and attempted, after the manner of *dilettanti*, to draw what could not be drawn, still less make a picture; namely, the nearest mountain tops, whose sides, with their white furrows and black ridges, were gradually made visible by the melting of the snow. Nevertheless, that fruitless effort has impressed the image indelibly on my memory.

My companion stepped briskly up to me, and began, "What say you of the story of our spiritual host last evening? Have not you, as well as myself, felt a desire to descend from this dragon's height into those charming regions below? A ramble through these gorges must be glorious and not very toilsome; and, when it ends with Bellinzona, what a pleasure that must be! The words of the good father have again brought a living image before my soul of the isles of the Lago Maggiore. We have heard and seen so much of them since Keyssler's travels, that I cannot resist the temptation."

"Is it not so with you too?" he resumed: "you are sitting on exactly the right spot; I stood there once, but had not the courage to jump down. You can go on without ceremony, wait for me at Airolo: I will follow with the courier when I have taken leave of the good father, and settled everything."

"Such an enterprise," I replied, "so suddenly undertaken, does not suit me." "What's the use of deliber-

ating so much?" cried he: "we have money enough to get to Milan, where we shall find credit; through our fair, I know more than one mercantile friend there." He grew still more urgent. "Go!" said I, "and make all ready for the departure: then we will decide."

In such moments it seems to me as if a man feels no resolution in himself, but is rather governed and determined by earlier impressions. Lombardy and Italy lay before me, altogether foreign land; while Germany, as a well-known dear home, full of friendly, domestic scenes, and where, let me confess it,—was that which had so long entirely enchained me, and on which my existence was centred, remained even now the most indispensable element, beyond the limits of which I felt afraid to step. A little golden heart, which, in my happiest hours, I had received from *her*, still hung love-warmed about my neck, suspended by the same ribbon to which she had tied it. Snatching it from my bosom, I loaded it with kisses. This incident gave rise to a poem, which I here insert:

Thou, of joy that died away, the token,
Which as yet I on my neck am wearing,
Longer hold'st us twain, than mental tie that's broken.
Art thou the length of love's short days repairing?

Flee I, Lilli, from thee! Must still, tied to thy fetter,
Like unto a debtor,
Roam in strange lands, through vales and forests darting!
Ah! not so soon could this my heart from
My Lilli's heart be parting.

Like a bird that erst did break his string,
And to the wood returns,
He drags of his prison the disgrace,
Still some bit of the string on his trace;
No longer the old bird, once born with freedom's wing;
Has been a slave where'er he turns.

— *Editor's Version.*

Seeing my friend with the guide, who carried our knapsack, come storming up the heights, I rose hastily, and removed from the precipice, where I had been watching his return, lest he should drag me down into the abyss with him. I also saluted the pious father, and turned, without saying a word, to the path by which we had come. My friend followed me, somewhat hesitating, and, in spite of his love and attachment to me, kept for a long time at a distance behind, till at last a glorious waterfall brought us again together for the rest of our journey; and what had been once decided was from henceforth looked upon as the wisest and the best.

Of our descent I will only remark that we now found the snow-bridge, over which we had securely travelled with a heavy laden train a few days before, all fallen in, and that now, as we had to make a circuit around the opened thicket, we were filled with astonishment and admiration by the colossal fragments of that piece of natural architecture.

My friend could not quite get over his disappointment at not returning into Italy: very likely he had thought of the plan some time before, and with amiable cunning had hoped to surprise me on the spot. On this account our return did not proceed so merrily as our advance; but I was occupied all the more constantly on my silent route, with trying to fix, at least in its more comprehensible and characteristic details, that sense of the sublime and vast, which, as time advances, usually grows contracted in our minds.

Not without many both new and renewed emotions and reflections did we pass over the remarkable heights about the Vierwaldstätter Lake, on our way to Küsnacht, where, having landed, and pursued our ramble, we had to greet Tell's chapel, which lay on our route, and to reflect upon that assassination, which, in the

eyes of the whole world, is so heroical, patriotic, and glorious. So, too, we sailed over the Zuger Lake, which we had seen in the distance as we looked down from Rigi. In Zug, I only remember some painted glass, inserted into the casement of a chamber of the inn, not large to be sure, but excellent in its way. Our route then led over the Albis into the Sihl valley, where, by visiting a young Hanoverian, Von Lindau, who delighted to live there in solitude, we sought to mitigate the vexation which he had felt some time before in Zurich, at our declining the offer of his company not in the most friendly or polite manner. The jealous friendship of the worthy Passavant was really the reason of my rejecting the truly dear but inconvenient presence of another.

But, before we descend again from these glorious heights to the lake and to the pleasantly situated city, I must make one more remark upon my attempts to carry away some idea of the country by drawing and sketching. A habit from youth upward of viewing a landscape as a picture led me, whenever I observed any picturesque spot in the natural scenery, to try and fix it, and so to preserve a sure memorial of such moments. But, having hitherto only exercised myself on confined scenes, I soon felt the incompetency of my art for such a world.

The haste I was in at once compelled me to have recourse to a singular expedient: scarcely had I noticed an interesting object, and with light and very sketchy strokes drawn the outlines on the paper, than I noted down, in words, the particular objects which I had no time to catch and fill up with the pencil, and, by this means, made the scenes so thoroughly present to my mind, that every locality, whenever I afterward wanted it for a poem or a story, floated at once before me, and was entirely at my command.

On returning to Zurich, I found the Stolbergs were

gone: their stay in this city had been cut short in a singular manner.

It must be confessed that travellers, upon removing to a distance from the restraints of home, are only too apt to think they are stepping, not only into an unknown, but into a perfectly free, world, — a delusion which it was the more easy to indulge in at this time, as there was not as yet any passports to be examined by the police, or any tolls and such like checks and hinderances on the liberties of travellers, to remind men that abroad they are subject to still worse and more painful restraints than at home.

If the reader will only bear in mind this decided tendency to realise the freedom of nature, he will be able to pardon the young spirits who regarded Switzerland as the very place in which to "idyllise" the fresh independence of youth. The tender poems of Gessner, as well as his charming sketches, seemed decidedly to justify this expectation.

In fact, bathing in wide waters seems to be one of the best qualifications for expressing such poetic talents. Upon our journey thus far, such natural exercises had not seemed exactly suitable to modern customs; and we had, in some degree, abstained from them. But, in Switzerland, the sight of the cool stream — flowing, running, rushing, then gathering on the plain, and gradually spreading out to a lake — presented a temptation that was not to be resisted. I cannot deny that I joined my companions in bathing in the clear lake; but we chose a spot far enough, as we supposed, from all human eyes. But naked bodies shine a good way, and whoever chanced to see us doubtless took offence.

The good, innocent youths who thought it nowise shocking to see themselves half naked, like poetic shepherds, or entirely naked, like heathen deities, were admonished by their friends to leave off all such

practices. They were given to understand that they were living, not in primeval nature, but in a land where it was esteemed good and salutary to adhere to the old institutions and customs, which had been handed down from the Middle Ages. They were not disinclined to acknowledge the propriety of all this, especially as the appeal was made to the Middle Ages, which to them seemed venerable as a second nature. Accordingly, they left the more public lake-shores; but when, in their walks through the mountains, they fell in with the clear, rustling, refreshing streams, it seemed to them impossible, in the middle of July, to abstain from the refreshing exercise. Thus, on their wide-sweeping walks, they came also to the shady vale where the Sihl, streaming behind the Albis, shoots down to empty itself into the Limmat below Zurich. Far from every habitation, and even from all trodden foot-paths, they thought there could be no objection here to their throwing off their clothes and boldly meeting the foaming waves. This was not indeed done without a shriek, without a wild shout of joy, excited partly by the chill and partly by the satisfaction, by which they thought to consecrate these gloomy, wooded rocks into an idyllic scene.

But whether persons previously ill-disposed had crept after them, or whether this poetic tumult called forth adversaries even in the solitude, cannot be determined. Suffice it to say, stone after stone was thrown at them from the motionless bushes above, whether by one or more, whether accidentally or purposely, they could not tell: however, they thought it wisest to renounce the quickening element, and look after their clothes.

No one got hit: they sustained no injury but the moral one of surprise and chagrin; and, full of young life as they were, they easily shook off the recollection of this awkward affair.

But the most disagreeable consequences fell upon Lavater, who was blamed for having given so friendly a welcome to such saucy youths, as even to have arranged walks with them, and otherwise to show attention to persons whose wild, unbridled, unchristian, and even heathenish, habits, had caused so much scandal to a moral and well-regulated neighbourhood.

Our clever friend, however, who well knew how to smooth over such unpleasant occurrences, contrived to hush up this one also; and, after the departure of these meteoric travellers, we found, on our return, peace and quiet restored.

In the fragment of Werther's travels, which has lately been reprinted in the sixteenth volume of my works, I have attempted to describe this contrast of the commendable order and legal restraint of Switzerland, with that life of nature which youth in its delusions so loudly demands. But as people generally are apt to take all that the poet advances without reserve for his decided opinions, or even didactic censure, so the Swiss were very much offended at the comparison; and I, therefore, dropped the intended continuation, which was to have represented, more or less in detail, Werther's progress up to the epoch of his sorrows, and which, therefore, would certainly have been interesting to those who wish to study mankind.

Arrived at Zurich, I devoted my time almost exclusively to Lavater, whose hospitality I again made use of. The "Physiognomy," with all its portraits and monstrous caricatures, weighed heavily and with an ever-increasing load on the shoulders of the worthy man. We arranged all as well as we could under the circumstances; and I promised him, on my return home, to continue my assistance.

I was led to give this promise by a certain youthful unlimited confidence in my own quickness of comprehension, and still more by a feeling of my readiness of

adaptation to any subject; for, in truth, the way in which Lavater dissected physiognomies was not at all in my vein. The impression which, at our first meeting, he had made upon me, determined, in some degree, my relation to him; although a general wish to oblige, which was always strong, joined to the light-heartedness of youth, had a great share in all my actions, by causing me to see things in a certain twilight atmosphere.

Lavater's mind was altogether an imposing one: in his society it was impossible to resist his decided influence; and I had no choice but to submit to it at once, and set to work observing foreheads and noses, eyes and mouths, in detail, and weighing their relations and proportions. My fellow observer did this from necessity, as he had to give a perfect account of what he himself had discerned so clearly; but to me it always seemed like a trick, a piece of espionage, to attempt to analyse a man into his elements before his face, and so to get upon the track of his hidden moral peculiarities. I had more pleasure in listening to his conversation, in which he unveiled himself at will. And yet, I must confess, I always felt a degree of constraint in Lavater's presence; for while, by his art of physiognomy, he possessed himself of our peculiarities, he also made himself, by conversation, master of our thoughts, which, with a little sagacity, he would easily guess from our variety of phrases.

He who feels a pregnant synthesis in himself has peculiarly a right to analyse, since by the outward particulars he tests and legitimises his inward whole. How Lavater managed in such cases, a single example will suffice to show.

On Sundays, after the sermon, it was his duty, as an ecclesiastic, to hold the short-handled velvet alms-bag before each one who went out, and to bless as he received the pious gift. Now, on a certain Sunday, he proposed to

himself, without looking at the several persons as they dropped in their offerings, to observe only their hands, and by them, silently, to judge of the forms of their owner. Not only the shape of the finger, but its peculiar action in dropping the gift, was attentively noted by him; and he had much to communicate to me on the conclusions he had formed. How instructive and exciting must such conversations have been to one who also was seeking to qualify himself for a painter of men!

Often, in my after life, had I occasion to think of Lavater, who was one of the best and worthiest men that I ever formed so intimate a relation with. These notices of him that I have introduced in this work were accordingly written at various times. Following our divergent tendencies, we gradually became strangers to each other; and yet I never could bring myself to part with the favourable idea which his worth had left upon my mind. In thought, I often brought him before me; and thus arose these leaves, which, as they were written without reference to and independently of each other, may contain some repetitions, but, it is hoped, no contradictions.

By his cast of mind, Lavater was a decided realist, and knew of nothing ideal except in a moral form: by keeping this remark steadily in mind, you will most readily understand this rare and singular man.

His "Prospects of Eternity" look merely for a continuance of the present state of existence under easier conditions than those which we have now to endure. His "Physiognomy" rests on the conviction that the sensible corresponds throughout with the spiritual, and is not only an evidence of it, but indeed its representative.

The ideals of art found little favour with him, because with his sharp look he saw too clearly the impos-

sibility of such conceptions ever being embodied in a living organisation; and he therefore banished them into the realm of fable, and even of monstrosity.

His incessant demand for a realisation of the ideal gained him the reputation of a visionary, although he maintained and felt convinced that no man insisted more strongly on the actual than he did: accordingly, he never could detect the error in his mode of thinking and acting.

Seldom has there been a man who strove more passionately than he did for public recognition, and thus he was particularly fitted for a teacher; but, if all his labours tended to the intellectual and moral improvement of others, this was by no means their ultimate aim.

To realise the character of Christ was what he had most at heart: hence that almost insane zeal of his, to have pictures of Christ drawn, copied, moulded, one after another; none of which, however, as to be expected, ever satisfied him.

His writings are hard to understand, even now; for it is far from easy to penetrate into his precise meaning. No one ever wrote so much of the times and for the times, as Lavater: his writings are veritable journals, which, in an especial manner, require to be explained by the history of the day; they, moreover, are written in the language of a coterie, which one must first acquaint one's self with before we can hold communion with them, otherwise many things will appear stupid and absurd, even to the most intelligent reader. Indeed, objections enough of the kind have been made against this author, both in his lifetime and since.

Thus, for example, with our rage for dramatising and representing under this form all that struck us, and caring for no other, we once so warmed his brain with a dramatic ardour, that, in his "Pontius Pilate," he laboured very hard to show that there is no more

dramatic work than the Bible, and, especially, that the history of Christ's passion must be regarded as the drama of all dramas.

In this chapter, and, indeed, throughout the work, Lavater appears greatly to resemble Father Abraham of Santa Clara; for into this manner every richly gifted mind necessarily falls who wishes to work upon his contemporaries. He must acquaint himself with existing tendencies and passions, with the speech and terminology of the day, and adapt them to his ends, in order to approach the mass whom he seeks to influence.

Since Lavater took Christ literally, — as described by the Scriptures and by most commentators, — he let this representation serve so far for the supplement of his own being, that he ideally incorporated the God-man into his own individual humanity, until he finally was able to imagine himself melted into one and united with him, and, indeed, to have become the same person.

This decidedly literal faith had also worked in him a perfect conviction that miracles can be wrought to-day as well as heretofore. Accordingly, since in some important and trying emergencies of his earlier days, he had, by means of earnest and indeed violent prayer, succeeded in procuring an instantaneous and favourable turn of the impending calamity, no mere cold objections of the reasoning intellect would make him for a moment waver in this faith. Penetrated, moreover, by the idea of the greatness and excellence of Humanity as restored by Christ, and through him destined to a blissful immortality, but, at the same time, fully sensible of the manifold requisitions of man's heart and mind, and of his insatiable yearnings after knowledge, and, moreover, feeling in himself that desire of expanding himself into the infinite to which the starry heavens seem so sensibly to invite us, he

wrote under these feelings his "Prospects of Eternity," which must have appeared a very strange book indeed to the greater part of his contemporaries.

All this striving, however, all wishes, all undertakings, were overborne by the genius for physiognomy, which Nature had bestowed upon him. For as the touchstone, by its blackness and peculiar roughness of surface, is eminently fitted to distinguish between the metals which are applied to it; so that pure idea of humanity, which Lavater carried within himself, and that sharp yet delicate gift of observation, which at first he exercised from natural impulse occasionally only and accidentally, but afterward with deliberate reflection and regularly, qualified him in the highest degree to note the peculiarities of individual men, and to understand, distinguish, and express them.

Every talent which rests on a decided natural gift seems, from our inability to subordinate either it or its operations to any idea, to have something of magic about it. And, in truth, Lavater's insight into the characters of individuals surpassed all conception: one was utterly amazed at his remarks, when in confidence we were talking of this or that person; nay, it was frightful to live near a man who clearly discerned the nicest limits by which nature had been pleased to modify and distinguish our various personalities.

Every one is apt to believe that what he possesses himself may be communicated to others; and so Lavater was not content to make use of this great gift for himself alone, but insisted that it might be found and called forth in others, — nay, that it might even be imparted to the great mass. The many dull and malicious misinterpretations, the stupid jests in abundance, and detracting railleries, this striking doctrine gave rise to, may still be remembered by some men: however, it must be owned that the worthy

man himself was not altogether without blame in the matter. For though a high moral sense preserved the unity of his inner being, yet, with his manifold labours, he was unable to attain to outward unity, since he did not possess the slightest capacity for philosophical method, nor for artistic talent.

He was neither Thinker nor Poet; indeed, not even an orator, in the proper sense of the term. Utterly unable to take a comprehensive and methodical view, he nevertheless formed an unerring judgment of individual cases; and these he noted down boldly side by side. His great work on physiognomy is a striking proof and illustration of this. In himself, the idea of the moral or of the sensual man might form a whole; but out of himself he could not represent this idea, except practically by individual cases, in the same way as he himself had apprehended them in life.

That very work sadly shows us how, in the commonest matter of experience, so sharp-sighted a man may go groping about him. For after spending an immense sum, and employing every artist and botcher living, he procured at last drawings and engravings which were so far without character, that he is obliged in his work to say after each one that it is more or less a failure, unmeaning and worthless. True, by this means he sharpened his own judgment, and the judgment of others; but it also proves that his mental bias led him rather to heap up cases of experience, than to draw from them any clear and sober principle. For this reason he never could come to results, though I often pressed him for them. What in later life he confided as such to his friends, were none to me; for they consisted of nothing more than a collection of certain lines and features, nay, warts and freckles, with which he had seen certain moral, and frequently immoral, peculiarities associated. There were certainly among them some remarks causing sur-

prise and disgust, but they formed no series ; one thing followed another accidentally ; there was no gradual advance toward any general deductions, and no reference to any principles previously established. And, indeed, there was just as little of literary method or artistic feeling to be found in his other writings, which invariably contained passionate and earnest expositions of his thoughts and objects, and supplied by the most affecting and appropriate instances, what they could not accomplish by the general conception.

The following reflections, as they refer to those circumstances, may be aptly introduced here.

No one willingly concedes superiority to another, so long as he can in any way deny it. Natural gifts of every kind can the least be denied ; and yet, by the phraseology common in those times, genius was ascribed to the poet alone. But another world seemed all at once to rise up : genius was looked for in the physician, in the general, in the statesman, and before long in all men who thought to make themselves eminent either in theory or practice. Zimmermann, especially, had advanced these claims. Lavater, by his views of physiognomy, was compelled to assume a more general distribution of mental gifts by nature : the word *genius* became a universal symbol ; and, because men heard it uttered so often, they thought that what was meant by it was habitually at hand. But then, since every one felt himself justified in demanding genius of others, he finally believed that he also must possess it himself. The time was yet far distant when it could be affirmed that genius is that power of man which, by its deeds and actions, gives laws and rules. At this time it was thought to manifest itself only by overstepping existing laws, breaking established rules, and declaring itself above all restraint. It was, therefore, an easy thing to be a genius ; and

nothing was more natural than that extravagance, both of word and deed, should provoke all orderly men to oppose themselves to such a monster.

When anybody rushed into the world on foot, without exactly knowing why or whither, it was called a pass of genius; and, when any one undertook an aimless and useless absurdity, it was a stroke of genius. Young men, of vivacious and true talents, too often lost themselves in the limitless; and then older men of understanding, wanting perhaps in talent and in soul, found a most malicious gratification in exposing to the public gaze their manifold and ludicrous miscarriages.

For my part, in the development and the expression of my own ideas, I perhaps experienced far more hinderance and checks from the false coöperation and interference of the like-minded, than by the opposition of those whose turn of mind was directly contrary to my own.

With a strange rapidity, words, epithets, and phrases, which have once been cleverly employed to disparage the highest intellectual gifts, spread by a sort of mechanical repetition among the multitude; and in a short time they are to be heard everywhere, even in common life, and in the mouths of the most uneducated; indeed, before long they even creep into dictionaries. In this way the word genius had suffered so much from misrepresentation, that it was almost desired to banish it entirely from the German language.

And so the Germans, with whom the common voice is more apt to prevail than with other nations, would perhaps have sacrificed the fairest flower of speech, the word which, though apparently foreign, really belongs to every people, had not the sense for what is highest and best in man been happily restored and solidly established by a profounder philosophy.

In the preceding pages mention has been frequently made of the youthful times of two men whose memory will never fade from the history of German literature and morals. At this period, however, we came to know them, as it were, only by the errors into which they were misled by a false maxim which prevailed among their youthful contemporaries. Nothing, therefore, can be more proper than with due appreciation and respect to paint their natural form, their peculiar individuality, just as it appeared at that time, and as their immediate presence exhibited itself to the penetrating eye of Lavater. Consequently, since the heavy and expensive volumes of the great work on physiognomy are probably accessible to a few only of our readers, I have no scruple in inserting here the remarkable passages of that work which refer to both the Stolbergs in the second part, and its thirtieth fragment, p. 224 :

“The young men, whose portraits and profiles we have here before us, are the first men who ever sat and stood to me for physiognomical description, as another would sit to a painter for his portrait.

“I knew them before, the noble ones — and I made the first attempt, in accordance with nature and with all my previous knowledge, to observe and to describe their character.

“Here is the description of the whole man :

“FIRST, OF THE YOUNGER.

“See the blooming youth of twenty-five! The lightly floating, buoyant, elastic creature! It does not lie, it does not stand, it does not lean, it does not fly: it floats or swims. Too full of life to rest, too supple to stand firm, too heavy and too weak to fly.

“A floating thing, then, which does not touch the earth! In its whole contour not a single slack line,

but, on the other hand, no straight one, no tense one, none firmly arched or stiffly curved; no sharp-entering angles, no rock-like projection of the brow; no hardness; no stiffness; no defiant roughness; no threatening insolence; no iron will — all is elastic, winning, but nothing iron; no steadfast and searching profundity; no slow reflection or prudent thoughtfulness; nowhere the reasoner with the scales held firmly in the one hand, and the sword in the other; and yet not the least formality in look or judgment! But still the most perfect straightforwardness of intellect, or rather the most immaculate sentiment of truth! Always the inward feeler, never the deep thinker; never the discoverer, the testing unfolder of truth so quickly seen, so quickly known, so quickly loved, and quickly grasped. . . . Perpetual soarer, a seer; idealiser; beautifier; — that gives a shape and form to all his ideas! Ever the half-intoxicated poet, seeing only what he will see; — not the sorrowfully languishing; not the sternly crushing; but the lofty, noble, powerful! Who with ‘thirst for the sun’ (*Sonnendurst*), hovers to and fro in the regions of air, strives aloft, and again — *sinks* not to earth! but throws himself headlong to earth, bather in the floods of the ‘Rock-stream’ (*Felsenstrom*), and cradles himself ‘in the thunder of the echoing rocks around’ (*im Donner der hallenden Felsen umher*). His glance — not the fire-glance of the eagle. His brow and nose — not the courage of the lion. His breast — not the steadfastness of the steed that neighs for battle! In the whole, however, there is much of the tearing activity of the elephant. . . .

“The projecting upper lip slightly drawn up toward the overhanging nose, which is neither sharply cut nor angular, evinces, with such a closing of the mouth, much taste and sensibility; while the lower part of the face bespeaks much sensuality, indolence, and thoughtlessness. The whole outline of the profile

shows openness, honesty, humanity, but at the same time a liability to be led astray, and a high degree of that good-hearted indiscretion which injures no one but himself. The middle line of the mouth bespeaks, in its repose, a downright, planless, weak, good-natured disposition; when in motion, a tender, finely feeling, exceedingly susceptible, benevolent, noble man. In the arch of the eyelids, and in the glance of the eyes, there sits not Homer, but the deepest, most thorough, and most quick, feeling, and comprehension of Homer; not the epic, but the lyric, poet; genius, which fuses, moulds, creates, glorifies, hovers, transforms all into a heroic form — which deifies all. The half-closed eyelids, from such an arch, indicate the keenly sensitive poet, rather than the slowly labouring artist, who creates after a plan; the whimsical rather than the severe. The full face of the youth is much more taking and attractive than the somewhat too loose, too protracted, half-face; the fore-part of the face, in its slightest motion, tells of a highly sensitive, thoughtful, inventive, untaught, inward goodness, of a softly tremulous, wrong-aborring love of liberty — an eager vivacity. It cannot conceal from the commonest observer the slightest impression which it receives for the moment, or adopts for ever. Every object, which nearly concerns or interests him, drives the blood into the cheeks and nose; where honour is concerned, the most maidenly blush of shame spreads like lightning over the delicately sensitive skin.

“The complexion is not the pale one of all-creating, all-consuming genius; not the wildly glowing one of the contemptuous destroyer; not the milk-white one of the blond; not the olive one of the strong and hardy; not the brownish one of the slowly plodding peasant; but the white, the red, and the violet, running one into another, and so expressively, and so happily, blended together like the strength and weak-

ness of the whole character. The soul of the whole and of each single feature is freedom, and elastic activity, which springs forth easily and is as easily repulsed. The whole fore-face, and the way the head is carried, promise magnanimity and upright cheerfulness. Incorruptible sensibility, delicacy of taste, purity of mind, goodness and nobleness of soul, active power, a feeling of strength and of weakness, shine out so transparently through the whole face, that what were otherwise a lively self-complacency dissolves itself into a noble modesty; and most artlessly and unconstrainedly the natural pride and vanity of youth melt with the loveliness of twilight into the easy majesty of the whole man. The whitish hair, the length and awkwardness of form, the softness and lightness of step, the hesitating gait, the flatness of the breast, the fair, unfurrowed brow, and various other features, spread over the whole man a certain feminine air, by which the inward quickness of action is moderated, and every intentional offence and every meanness made for ever impossible to the heart; but at the same time clearly evincing that the spirited and fiery poet, with all his unaffected thirst for freedom and for emancipation, is neither destined to be a man of business, thoroughly persistent, who steadily and resolutely carries out his plans, or to become immortal in the bloody strife. And now, in conclusion, I remark, for the first time, that I have as yet said nothing of the most striking trait, — the noble simplicity, free from all affectation! Nothing of his childlike openness of heart! Nothing of the entire unconsciousness of his outward nobility! Nothing of the inexpressible *bonhommie* with which he accepts and bears reproaches or warnings, nay, even accusations and wrongful charges.

“But who can find an end, who will undertake to tell all that he sees or feels in a good man, in whom there is so much pure humanity?

“DESCRIPTION OF THE ELDER STOLBERG.

“What I have said of the younger brother — how much of it may be said also of the elder! The principal thing I have to remark is the following:

“This figure and this character are more compact and less diffuse than the former. There all was longer or flatter; here all is shorter, broader, more arched, and rounded: there all was vague; here everything is more precise and sharply defined. So the brow; so the nose; so the breast: more compressed, more active, less diffuse, more of concentrated life and power! For the rest, the same amiableness and *bonhomie*! Not that striking openness, rather more of reserve, but in principle, or rather in deed, the same honourable tone. The same invincible abhorrence of injustice and baseness; the same irreconcilable hatred of all that is called cunning and trickery; the same unyielding opposition to tyranny and despotism; the same pure, incorruptible sensibility to all that is noble and great and good; the same need of friendship and of freedom; the same sensitiveness and noble thirst for glory; the same catholicity of heart for all good, wise, sincere, and energetic men, renowned or unrenowned, known or misunderstood, — and the same light-hearted inconsiderateness. No! not exactly the same. The face is sharper, more contracted, firmer; has more inward, self-developing capacity for business and practical counsels; more of enterprising spirit — which is shown especially by the strongly prominent and fully rounded bones of the eye-sockets. Not the all-blending, rich, pure, lofty poet’s feeling — not the ease and rapidity of the productive power which marks the other — but yet he is, and that in profounder depths, vivacious, upright, ardent. Not the airy genius of light floating away in the morning red of heaven, and fashioning huge shapes therein — but

more of inward power, though perhaps less of expression! more powerful and terrible—less of elegance and finish; though his pencil, nevertheless, wants neither colouring nor enchantment. More wit and riotous humour; droll satire; brow, nose, look—all so downward, so overhanging—decidedly what it should be for original and all-enlivening wit, which does not gather from without, but brings forth from within. Above all, in this character every trait more prominent, more angular, more aggressive, more storming! No passive dulness, no relaxation, except in the sunken eyes, where, as well as in the brow and nose, pleasure evidently sits. In all besides—and even in this very brow, this concentration of all—in this look indeed—there is an unmistakable expression of natural, unacquired greatness; strength, impetuosity of manliness: constancy, simplicity, precision!”

After having in Darmstadt conceded to Merck the justice of his opinions, and allowed him to triumph, in his having predicted my speedy separation from these gay companions, I found myself again in Frankfurt, well received by every one, including my father; although the latter could not conceal his disappointment that I had not descended by the pass to Airolo, and announced to him from Milan my arrival in Italy. All this was expressed by his silence rather than by his words; but above all he did not show the slightest sympathy with those wild rocks, those lakes of mist and dragon's nests.

At last, however, by an incidental remark, by no means intended for a reproach, he gave me to understand how little all such sights were worth: he who has not seen Naples, he observed, has lived to no end.

On my return I did not, I could not, avoid seeing Lilli: the position we maintained toward each other was tender and considerate. I was informed that they

had fully convinced her, in my absence, that she must break off her intimacy with me, and that this was the more necessary, and indeed more practicable, since, by my journey and voluntary absence, I had given a sufficiently clear intimation of my own intentions. Nevertheless, the same localities in town and country, the same friends, confidentially acquainted with all the past, could scarcely be seen without emotion by either of us — still and for ever lovers, although drawn apart in a mysterious way. It was an accursed state, which in a certain sense resembled Hades, or the meeting of the happy with the unhappy dead.

There were moments when departed days seemed to revive, but instantly vanished again, like ghosts.

Some kind people had told me in confidence, that Lilli, when all the obstacles to our union were laid before her, had declared, that for my love she was ready to renounce all present ties and advantages, and to go with me to America. America was then perhaps, still more than now, the Eldorado of all who found themselves crossed in the wishes of the moment.

But the very thing which should have animated my hopes depressed them only the more. My handsome paternal house, only a few hundred steps from hers, offered certainly a more tolerable and more attractive habitation than an uncertain and remote locality beyond the ocean; still I do not deny, that in her presence all hopes, all wishes, sprang to life again, and irresolution was stirring within me.

True, my sister's injunctions were very peremptory and precise: not only had she, with all the shrewd penetration of which she was mistress, explained the situation of things to me, but she had also, with painfully cogent letters, harped upon the same text still more powerfully. "It were very well," said she, "if you could not help it: then you would have to put up with it; such things one must *suffer* but not *choose*."

Some months passed away in this most miserable of all conditions; every circumstance had conspired against the union; in her alone I felt, I knew, lay the power which could have overcome every difficulty.

Both lovers, conscious of their position, avoided all solitary interviews; but, in company, they could not help meeting in the usual formal way. It was now that I had to undergo the hardest trial, as every noble and feeling soul will acknowledge, when I shall have explained myself more fully.

It is generally allowed, that in a new acquaintance, in the formation of a new attachment, the lover gladly draws a veil over the past. Growing affection troubles itself about no antecedents; and as it springs up like genius, with the rapidity of lightning, it knows nothing either of past or future. It is true, my closer intimacy with Lilli had begun by her telling me the story of her early youth: how, from a child up, she had excited in many both a liking and devotion to herself, especially in strangers visiting her father's gay and lively house, and how she had found her pleasure in all this, though it had been attended with no further consequences, and had led to no permanent tie.

True, lovers consider all they have felt before only as preparation for their present bliss, only as the foundation on which the structure of their future life is to be reared. Past attachments seem like spectres of the night, which glide away before the break of day.

But what occurred! The fair came on, and with it appeared the whole swarm of those spectres in their reality: all the mercantile friends of the eminent house came one by one; and it was soon manifest, that not a man among them was willing or able wholly to give up a certain claim to the lovely daughter. The younger ones, without being obtrusive, still seemed to claim the rights of familiar friends; the middle-aged, with a

certain obliging dignity, like those who seek to make themselves beloved, and who, in all probability, might come forward with higher claims. There were fine men among them, with the additional recommendation of a substantial fortune.

The older gentlemen, with their *uncle's* ways and manners, were altogether intolerable: they could not bridle their hands, and, in the midst of their disagreeable twaddle, would demand a kiss, for which the cheek was not refused. It was so natural to her, gracefully to satisfy every one. The conversation, too, excited many a painful remembrance. Allusion was constantly made to pleasure-parties by water and by land, to perils of all kinds with their happy escapes, to balls and evening promenades, to the amusement afforded by ridiculous wooers, and to whatever could excite an uncomfortable jealousy in the heart of an inconsolable lover, who had, as it were, for a long time drawn to himself the sum of so many years. But amid all this crowd and gaiety, she did not push aside her friend; and, when she turned to him, she contrived, in a few words, to express all the tenderness which seemed allowable to their present position.

But let us turn from this torture, of which the memory even is almost intolerable, to poesy, which afforded, at least, an intellectual and heartfelt alleviation of my sufferings.

"Lilli's Menagerie" belongs somewhere to this period: I do not adduce the poem here, because it does not reveal the softer sentiment, but seeks only, with genial earnestness, to exaggerate the disagreeable, and, by comical and provoking images, to change renunciation into despair.

The following song expresses rather the sweeter side of that misery, and on that account is here inserted:

O sweet roses, ye are going !
 For my love ye did not grow ;
 For a sad heart ye were blowing,
 Which did hope no longer know.

Of those days I think with weeping,
 When I, angel, clung to thee,
 To my garden went out, peeping
 Early, first small buds to see.

Every fruit and every flower
 Still was laying at thy feet ;
 Hope not yet had lost all power,
 At thy sight in me did beat.

O sweet roses, ye are going !
 For my love ye did not grow ;
 For a sad heart ye were blowing,
 Which did hope no longer know.

— *Editor's Version.*

The opera of "Erwin and Elvira" was suggested by the pretty little romaunt or ballad introduced by Goldsmith in his "Vicar of Wakefield," which had given us so much pleasure in our happiest days, when we never dreamed that a similar fate awaited us.

I have already introduced some of the poetical productions of this epoch, and I only wish they had all been preserved. A never-failing excitement in the happy season of love, heightened by the beginning of care, gave birth to songs, which, throughout, expressed no overstrained emotion, but always the sincere feeling of the moment. From social songs for festivals, down to the most trifling of presentation-verses, all was living and real, and what a refined company had sympathised in ; first glad, then sorrowful, till, finally, there was no height of bliss, no depth of woe, to which a strain was not devoted.

All these internal feelings and outward doings, so far as they were likely to vex and pain my father,

were, by my mother's bustling prudence, skilfully kept from him. Although his hope of seeing me lead into his house that first one (who had so fully realised his ideas of a daughter-in-law) had died away, still this "state-lady," as he used to call her in his confidential conversations with his wife, would never suit him.

Nevertheless, he let matters take their course, and diligently occupied himself with his little Chancery. The young juristic friend, as well as the dexterous amanuensis, gained continually more and more of influence under his firm hand. As the absentee was now no longer missed there, they let me take my own way, and sought to establish themselves firmly upon a ground on which I was not destined to thrive.

Fortunately, my own tendencies corresponded with the sentiments and wishes of my father. He had so great an idea of my poetic talents, and felt so personal a pleasure in the applause which my earliest efforts had obtained, that he often talked to me on the subject of new and further attempts. On the other hand, I did not venture to communicate to him any of these social effusions and poems of passion.

As, in "Götz von Berlichingen," I had, in my own way, mirrored forth the image of an important epoch of the world, I now again carefully looked round for another crisis in political history of similar interest. Accordingly, the Revolt of the Netherlands attracted my attention. In Götz I had depicted a man of parts and energy, sinking under the delusion, that in times of anarchy, ability, and honesty of purpose, must have their weight and influence. The design of Egmont was to show that the most firmly established institutions cannot maintain themselves against a powerful and shrewdly calculating despotism. I had talked so earnestly with my father about what the play ought to be, and what I wanted to do, that it inspired him with an invincible desire to see the plan which I had

already worked out in my head, fairly set down on paper, in order to its being printed and admired.

In earlier times, while I still hoped to gain Lilli's hand, I had applied myself with the utmost diligence to the study and practice of legal business; but now I sought to fill the fearful gulf which separated me from her, with occupations of more intellect and soul. I therefore set to work in earnest with the composition of "Egmont." Unlike the first, "Götz von Berlichingen," however, it was not written in succession and in order; but, immediately after the first introduction, I went at once to the main scenes, without troubling myself about the various connecting links. I made rapid progress, because my father, knowing my fitful way of working, spurred me on (literally and without exaggeration) day and night, and seemed to believe that the plan, so easily conceived, might as easily be executed.

TWENTIETH BOOK.

AND so I got on rapidly with my "Egmont;" and, while I found in this some alleviation of my wounded passion, the society of a clever artist also helped me through many wearisome hours. And thus, as had often before been the case, a vague desire of practical improvement brought me a secret peace of mind at a time when it could scarcely be hoped for.

John Melchior Kraus, who had been born at Frankfort, but educated in Paris, having just returned from a short tour to the north of Germany, paid me a visit; and I immediately felt an impulse and a need to attach myself to him. He was a cheerful, merry fellow, whose light, joyous disposition had found its right sphere in Paris.

At that time Paris promised a pleasant welcome for Germans: Philip Hackert was residing there in credit and opulence; the true German style in which, both in oil and water-colours, he faithfully executed landscapes after nature, met with great favour, as contrasted with the formal "*mannerism*" into which the French had fallen. Wille, in high esteem as a copper-plate engraver, supported and made German excellence more widely known. Grimm, already an artist of some influence, rejoiced to help his countrymen. Pleasant excursions, in order to take original sketches from nature, were constantly undertaken, in which much of undoubted excellence was either executed or designed.

Boucher and Watteau, both of them artists born, whose works, though fluttering in the style and spirit

of the time, were always highly respectable, were favourably inclined to the new school, and even took an active part in their excursions, though only for the sake of amusement and experiment. Greuze, living quietly by himself in his family circle, and fond of representing such domestic scenes, seemed delighted with his own works, held an honoured and easy pencil.

All these several styles our townsman Kraus was able to take up and blend with his own particular talent; he formed himself in school after school, and was skilful in his portrait-like delineations of family and friendly gatherings; equally happy was he in his landscape sketches, which cordially commended themselves to the eye by their clear outlines, massive shadows, and agreeable colouring. The inward sense was satisfied by a certain *naïve* truth, while the admirer of artistic skill was especially pleased with the tact by which he arranged and grouped into a picture what he had copied singly from nature.

He was a most agreeable companion; a cheerful equanimity never failed him; obliging without obsequiousness, reserved without pride; he was everywhere at home, everywhere beloved, the most active, and, at the same time, the most manageable, of all mortals. With such talents, and of such a disposition, he soon won the favour of the higher circles; but he was especially well received at the castle of the Baron von Stein, at Nassau on the Lahn, whose accomplished and lovely daughter he assisted in her artistic studies, and in many ways enlivened the whole circle.

Upon the marriage of this excellent lady to the Count von Werther, the newly wedded couple took the artist with them to Thuringia, where the count possessed a large estate; and thus he got to Weimar. His acquaintance was immediately sought, his talents were appreciated — and a wish expressed that he would fix his permanent abode there.

Obliging as he was to everybody, upon his return at this time to Frankfort, he stimulated my love of art, which had been contented with merely collecting, and to making practical essays. The neighbourhood of the artist is indispensable to the *dilettante*, for the latter sees all that is wanting in himself supplied by the former: the wishes of the amateur are fulfilled in the artist.

By a certain natural talent, assisted by practice, I succeeded pretty well in an outline, and I could give the shape of all that I saw before me in nature; but I wanted the peculiar plastic power, the skilful industry, which lends a body to the outline by well-graduated light and shade. My copies were rather remote suggestions of the real form, and my figures like those light, airy beings in Dante's "Purgatory," which, casting no shadow themselves, fled affrighted at the shadows of actual bodies.

Lavater's fishing for physiognomical treasures — for so we may well designate the importunate urgency with which he called upon all men, not only to observe physiognomies, but also practically to make, be it artistic or most bungling, attempts at copying faces — led me into the habit of taking the portraits of all my friends on gray paper, with black and white chalk. The likeness was not to be mistaken, but it required the hand of my artistic friend to make them stand out from the dark background.

In turning over and looking through the rich portfolio of drawings which the good Kraus had taken during his travels, we had most pleasant talk together when he came to the sketches of scenes and persons in and about Weimar. On such paintings I, too, was glad to dwell; and you may imagine that it must have been flattering to the young man, to see in so many pictures only the text which was to lead to a circumstantially repeated exclamation, they would be glad to see *him*

there! With much grace he would imitate the different persons whose portraits he had taken, and impersonate the greetings and invitations he had received. One very successful oil-painting represented the chapel-master, Wolf, at the piano, with his wife behind him preparing to sing; and this gave the artist opportunity to assure me, in earnest terms, of the warm welcome this worthy pair would give me. Among his sketches were several of the wood and mountain scenery around Bürgel. Here an honest forester, more, perhaps, to please his pretty daughters than himself, had, by means of bridges, railings, and mossy paths, opened pleasant and sociable walks through the rough masses of rocks, thickets, and plantations. In one of these beautiful promenades he had painted the fair damsels in white dresses, and not without their attendant cavaliers. In one of these you immediately recognised Bertuch, whose serious designs upon the oldest daughter were openly avowed; and Kraus was not offended if you ventured to refer a second youth to himself, and guessed his growing attachment to the sister.

Bertuch, as the pupil of Wieland, had so distinguished himself in science and in business, that, already appointed private secretary of the duke, he had the best possible prospects before him. From him we passed to Wieland, and talked at length of his rectitude and cheerfulness and kindly disposition; his fine literary and poetical designs were dwelt upon, and allusions were made to the influence of the *Merkur* throughout Germany: many other names of literary, political, or social distinction were also mentioned, and, among them, Musæus, Kirms, Berendis, and Ludecus. Of women, the wife of Wolf, and a widow Kotzebue with a lovely daughter and a bright boy, were, among many others, characterised and extolled. Everything seemed to point to a fresh and active life of literature and art.

And so, by degrees, was exhibited the element which,

on his return, the young duke was to fashion. His mother and guardian had prepared this state of things; while, as regarded the introduction of more important measures, all that, in accordance with the duty of such provisional governments, was left to the judgment and decision of the future sovereign. The sad ruin caused by the burning of the palace was already looked upon as furnishing occasion for new improvements. The mines at Ilmenau, which had stopped working, but which, it was asserted, might again be made profitable by going to the great expense of repairing the deep shaft; the academy at Jena, which was somewhat behind the spirit of the age, and was consequently threatened with the loss of some of its most able teachers; and many other matters,—roused a noble common interest. Already were looks cast around for persons, who, in the upward struggle of Germany, might be qualified to further such various designs for good; and the prospect seemed as fresh as the vivacity and energy of youth could desire. And if it seemed sad to bring a young princess, not to a home of a suitable princely dignity, but to a very ordinary dwelling built for quite a different object, still such beautifully situated and well contrived country-houses as Ettenburg, Belvedere, and other delightful pleasure-seats, gave enjoyment for the present, and also a hope that the life of nature thus rendered necessary might lead to profitable and agreeable occupations.

In the course of this biography we have circumstantially exhibited the child, the boy, the youth, seeking by different ways to approach to the Suprasensible, first looking with strong inclination to a religion of nature, then clinging with love to a positive one, and, finally, concentrating himself in the trial of his own powers, and joyfully giving himself up to the general faith. Whilst he wandered to and fro space which lay intermediate between the sensible and suprasen-

sible regions, seeking and looking about him, much came in his way which did not appear to belong to either; and he seemed to see, more and more distinctly, that it is better to avoid all thought of the immense and incomprehensible.

He thought he could detect in nature — both animate and inanimate, with soul or without soul — something which manifests itself only in contradictions, and which, therefore, could not be comprehended under any idea, still less under one word. It was not godlike, for it seemed unreasonable; not human, for it had no understanding; nor devilish, for it was beneficent; nor angelic, for it often betrayed a malicious pleasure. It resembled chance, for it evolved no consequences: it was like Providence, for it hinted at connection. All that limits us it seemed to penetrate; it seemed to sport at will with the necessary elements of our existence; it contracted time and expanded space. In the impossible alone did it appear to find pleasure, while it rejected the possible with contempt.

To this principle, which seemed to come in between all other principles to separate them, and yet to link them together, I gave the name of *Demoniac*, after the example of the ancients, and of those who, at any rate, had perceptions of the same kind. I tried to screen myself from this fearful principle, by taking refuge, according to my usual habits, in an imaginary creation.

Among the parts of history which I had particularly studied with some care were the events which have made the United Netherlands so famous. I had diligently examined the original sources, and had endeavoured as far as possible to get my facts at first hand, and to bring the whole period vividly before my mind's eye. The situations it presented appeared to me to be in the highest degree dramatic; while for a principal figure, around whom the others might be grouped with the happiest effect, there was Count

Egmont, whose greatness as a man and a hero was most captivating.

But for my purpose it was necessary to convert him into a character marked by such peculiarities as would grace a youth better than a man in years, and an unmarried man better than the father of a family; and one independent rather than one who, however freely disposed, is nevertheless restrained by the various relations of life.

Having thus, in my conception of Egmont's character, made him youthful, and set him free from all domestic restraints, I ascribed to him unlimited enjoyment of life and its pleasures, boundless self-reliance, a gift of drawing all men to himself, and consequently also of winning the favour of the people, and which, while it inspired a princess with a silent, and a young child of nature with an avowed, passion, won for him the sympathy of a shrewd statesman, and even the loving admiration of the son of his great adversary.

The personal courage which distinguishes the hero is the foundation upon which his whole character rests, the ground and soil from which it sprung. He knows no danger, and willingly is blind to the greatest when it is close at hand. Surrounded by enemies, we may at any rate cut our way through them: the meshes of state policy are harder to break through. The demoniacal element, which is in play on both sides, and in conflict with which the lovely falls while the hated triumphs; and above all the prospect that out of this conflict will spring a third element which will answer to the wishes of all men, — this perhaps is what has gained for the piece (not indeed immediately on its first appearance, but later, and at the right time) the favour which it now enjoys. Here, therefore, for the sake of many beloved readers, I will anticipate myself, and, as I know not whether I shall soon have another opportunity, will express a conviction which, however, I did

not form till a considerable period subsequent to that of which I am now writing.

Although this demoniacal element can manifest itself in all corporeal and incorporeal things, and even expresses itself most distinctly in animals, yet with man especially has it a most wonderful connection, forming in him a power, which, if it be not opposed to the moral order of the world, nevertheless does often so cross it that one may be regarded as the warp and the other as the woof.

For the phenomena which it gives rise to, there are innumerable names; for all philosophies and religions have tried in prose and poetry to solve this enigma, and to read once for all the riddle, an employment which they are welcome to continue.

But the most fearful manifestation of the demoniacal is when it is seen predominating in some individual character. During my life I have observed several instances of this, either more closely or remotely. Such persons are not always the most eminent men, either morally or intellectually; and it is seldom that they recommend themselves to our affections by goodness of heart: a tremendous energy seems to be seated in them; and they exercise a wonderful power over all creatures, and even over the elements; and, indeed, who shall say how much farther such influence may extend? All the moral powers combined are of no avail against them: in vain does the more enlightened portion of mankind attempt to throw suspicion upon them as deceived if not deceivers, — the mass is still drawn on by them. Seldom if ever do the great men of an age find their equals among their contemporaries, and they are to be overcome by nothing but by the universe itself; and it is from observation of this fact that the strange but most striking proverb must have risen, *Nemo contra Deum nisi Deus ipse*.

From these lofty recollections I return to the little-

ness of my own life, for which strange events, clothed at least with a demoniacal appearance, were in store. From the summit of Mont Gotthard I had turned my back upon Italy, and returned home; because I could not make up my mind to go to a distance from Lilli. An affection founded on the hope of possessing for life one dearly beloved in an intimate and cordial union does not die away all at once: on the contrary, it is nourished by a consideration of the reasonable desires and honest hopes we are conscious of cherishing.

It is in the nature of the thing, that in such cases the maiden is much more ready to restrict herself than the youth. To these beautiful children, as descendants of Pandora, is granted the enviable gift to charm, attract, and (more through nature and of half-purpose than through design or of malice) to gather admirers around them; and thus, like the Magician's Apprentice, they are often in danger of being frightened by the crowd of their adorers. And then at last a choice must be made from among them all, one must be exclusively preferred, one must carry off the bride.

And how often does accident determine the choice, and sway the mind of her who has to make the selection! I had renounced Lilli from conviction, but love made me suspect my own reason. Lilli had taken leave of me with the same feelings; and I had set out on a beautiful tour in order to distract my mind, but it had produced the opposite effect.

As long as I was absent, I believed in the separation, but did not believe in the renunciation. Recollections, hopes, and wishes all had free play. Now I came back; and as the reunion of those whose happy love is unopposed is a heaven, so the meeting again of two lovers who are kept apart by cold calculations of reason is an intolerable purgatory, a forecourt of hell. When I again entered the circle in which Lilli still moved, all the dissonances which tended to op-

pose our union seemed to have gained double force: when I stood once more before her, the conviction that she was lost to me fell heavy upon my heart.

Accordingly I resolved at once on flight; and under this impression there was nothing which I desired more than that the young ducal pair of Weimar should come from Carlsruhe to Frankfort, in order that, complying with old and new invitations, I might follow them to Weimar. Their Highnesses had always maintained toward me a gracious and confidential manner, for which I on my part returned the warmest thanks. My attachment to the duke from the first moment I saw him; my respect for the princess, whom by reputation I had so long known; a desire to render personally some friendly service to Wieland, whose conduct had been so liberal; and to atone upon the spot for my half-wilful, half-unintentional, improprieties,—were motives enough to induce and even to force the assent of a youth who now had no attachment to detain him. Moreover, from Lilli I must fly, whether to the south, where my father's enthusiasm was daily depicting to me a most glorious heaven of art and nature, or to the north, whither so distinguished a circle of eminent men invited me.

The young princely pair now reached Frankfort on their way home. The suite of the Duke of Meiningen was there at the same time; and by him, as well as by the Privy Counsellor von Dürkheim, who accompanied the young prince, I was received in the most friendly manner possible. But now, to keep up the fashion of my youth, a strange incident was not wanting: a little misunderstanding arose to throw me into an incredible but rather laughable perplexity.

Their Highnesses of Weimar and Meiningen were living in the same hotel. I received one day an invitation to dinner. My mind was so preoccupied with the court of Weimar, that I did not think it necessary

more particularly to inform myself, especially as I had not the presumption to imagine that any notice would be taken of me by the Duke of Meiningen. Accordingly I go in full dress to the "Roman Emperors," and, making my way to the apartments of the Weimar family, find them empty; being informed that the duke and his suite are with his Highness of Meiningen, I betake myself thither, and am kindly received. Supposing that this is only a morning visit, or that perhaps the two dukes are to dine together, I await the issue. Suddenly, however, the Weimar suite sets itself in motion; and I, of course, follow: but, instead of returning to their own apartments, they go straight down-stairs, and into their chariots; and I am left alone in the street.

Now, instead of inquiring into the matter, and adroitly and prudently seeking some solution of it, I, with my usual precipitancy, went straight home, where I found my parents at supper. My father shook his head, while my mother made every possible excuse for me. In the evening she told me in confidence, that, after I had left the table, my father had said, that he wondered very much how I, generally acute enough, could not see that in that quarter they only wished to make a fool of me and to laugh at me. But this did not move me; for meanwhile I had met with Herr von Dürkheim, who, in his mild way, brought me to book with sundry graceful and humourous reproaches. I was now awakened from my dream, and had an opportunity to express my most sincere thanks for the favour intended me contrary to my hope and expectation, and to ask forgiveness for my blunder.

After I had on good grounds determined to accept their friendly offers, the following arrangement was made. A gentleman of the duke's suite, who had stayed behind in Carlsruhe to wait for a landau which was building in Strásburg, was to be by a certain day

in Frankfort; and I was to hold myself in readiness to set off directly with him for Weimar. The cheering and gracious farewell with which the young sovereigns took their leave of me, the kind behaviour of the courtiers, made me look forward most anxiously to this journey, for which the road seemed so pleasantly to smooth itself.

But here, too, accidents came in to complicate so simple an arrangement, which through passionate impatience became still more confused, and was almost quite frustrated. Having announced the day of my departure, I had taken leave of everybody; and after packing up in haste my chattels, not forgetting my unprinted manuscripts, I waited anxiously for the hour which was to bring the aforesaid friend in the new landau, and to carry me into a new country and into new circumstances. The hour passed, and the day also; and since, to avoid a second leave-taking and the being overrun with visits, I had given out that I was to depart early in the morning, I was obliged to keep close to the house, and to my own room, and had thus placed myself in a peculiar situation.

But since solitude and a narrow space were always favourable to me, and I was now compelled to find some employment for these hours, I set to work on my "Egmont," and brought it almost to a close. I read over what I wrote to my father, who had acquired a peculiar interest in this piece, and wished nothing more than to see it finished and in print, since he hoped that it would add to his son's reputation. He needed something of this sort to keep him quiet, and to make him contented; for he was inclined to make very grave comments on the non-arrival of the carriage. He maintained that the whole affair was a mere fiction, would not believe in any new landau, and pronounced the gentleman who stayed behind to be a phantom of the air. It was, however, only indirectly that he gave

me to understand all this ; but he only tormented himself and my mother the more openly, insisting that the whole thing was a mere piece of court pleasantry, which they had practised upon me in consequence of my former escapades, and, in order to sicken and to shame me, had put upon me a disgraceful mockery instead of the expected honour.

As to myself, I held fast to my first faith, and congratulated myself upon these solitary hours, disturbed by neither friends nor strangers, nor by any sort of social distraction. I therefore vigorously proceeded with "Egmont," though not without inward mortification. And this frame of mind may perhaps have benefited the play itself, which, agitated by so many passions, could not very well have been written by one entirely passionless.

Thus passed a week, and I know not how many more days, when such perfect imprisonment began to prove irksome. Accustomed for many years to live in the open air, and to enter into society on the most frank and familiar terms, in the neighbourhood, too, of one dearly beloved, from whom, indeed, I had resolved to part, but from whom, so long as I was within the circle of her attraction, I found it difficult to absent myself, — all this began to make me so uneasy, that there was danger lest the interest of my tragedy should suffer, and my inventive powers be suspended through my impatience. Already for several evenings I had found it impossible to remain at home. Disguised in a large mantle, I crept round the city, passing the houses of my friends and acquaintances, and not forbearing to walk up to Lilli's window. She was living on the ground floor of a house at the corner of the street: the green shades were down, but I could easily remark that the lights stood in their usual places. Soon I heard her singing at the piano: it was the song, "Why dost draw me thus without resistance?"

which I had written for her hardly a year before. She seemed to me to sing with more expression than ever: I could make out every word distinctly, for I had placed my ear as close as the convex lattice would permit. After she had finished her song, I saw by the shadow which fell upon the curtain that she got up and walked backward and forward; but I tried in vain to catch the outline of her lovely person through the thick curtains. Nothing but the firm resolve to tear myself away, and not to afflict her with my presence, but actually to renounce her, and the thought of the strange impression which would be made by my reappearance, could have determined me to leave so dear a neighbourhood.

Several more days passed; and my father's suggestions seemed daily to become more probable, since not even a letter arrived from Carlsruhe to explain the reasons of the delay. I was unable to go on with my poetic labours; and now, in the uneasiness with which I was internally distracted, my father had the game to himself. He represented to me, that it was now too late to change matters, that my trunk was packed, and he would give me money and credit to go to Italy; but I must decide quickly. In such a weighty affair, I naturally doubted and hesitated. Finally, however, I agreed, that if, by a certain hour, neither carriage nor message came, I would set off, directing my steps first of all to Heidelberg, and from there over the Alps, not, however, going through Switzerland again, but rather taking the route through the Grisons or the Tyrol.

Strange things indeed must happen, when a planless youth, who of himself is so easily misled, is also driven into a false step by a passionate error of age. But so it is both with youth and the whole of life. It is not till the campaign is over that we learn to see through its tactics. In the ordinary course of things, such an accident could have been explained easily enough; but

we are always too ready to conspire with error against what is naturally probable, just as we shuffle the cards before we deal them round, in order that chance may not be deprived of its full share in the game. It is precisely thus that the element arises in and upon which the demoniacal so loves to work; and it even sports with us the more fearfully, the clearer are the inklings we have of its approach.

The last day for my waiting had arrived, and the next morning was fixed for my setting out on my travels; and now I felt extremely anxious to see my friend Passavant again, who had just returned from Switzerland, and who would really have had cause to be offended if, by keeping my plans entirely to myself, I had violated the intimate confidence which subsisted between us. I therefore sent him an anonymous note, requesting a meeting by night at a certain spot, where I was the first to arrive enveloped in my mantle: but he was not long after me; and if he wondered at the appointment, he was still more surprised to meet the person he did. His joy, however, was equal to his astonishment: conversation and counsel were not to be thought of; he could only wish me well through my Italian journey, and so we parted. The next day I saw myself by good time advancing along the mountain-road.

I had several reasons for going to Heidelberg: one was very sensible and prudent, for I had heard that my missing Weimar friend must pass through Heidelberg from Carlsruhe; and so, when we reached the post-house, I left a note which was to be handed to a cavalier who should pass through in the carriage described; the second reason was one of passion, and had reference to my late attachment to Lilli. In short, Mlle. Delf who had been the confidante of our love, and indeed the mediator with our respective parents for their approval of our marriage, lived there;

and I prized it as the greatest happiness to be able, before I left Germany, to talk over those happy times with a worthy, patient, and indulgent friend.

I was well received, and introduced into many families: among others, the family of the high warden of the forests, Von W——, particularly pleased me. The parents were dignified and easy in their manners, and one of the daughters resembled Frederica. It was just the time of vintage, the weather beautiful, and all my Alsatian feelings revived in the beautiful valley of the Rhine. At this time, however, my experience, both of myself and others, seemed very strange: it was as yet quite vague and undigested in my mind, no deliberate judgment upon life had shaped itself before me, and whatever sense of the infinite had been awakened within me served only to confuse and perplex me the more. In society, nevertheless, I was as agreeable and entertaining as ever, and possibly even still more so. Here, under this free air of heaven, among joyous men, I sought again the old sports which never lose their novelty and charm for youth. With an earlier and not yet extinguished love in my heart, I excited sympathy without seeking it, even though it sought no utterance of itself; and thus I soon became at home in this circle, and indeed necessary to it; and I forgot that I had resolved, after talking away a couple of evenings, to continue my journey.

Mlle. Delf was one of those persons, who, without exactly intriguing, always like to have some business in hand, and to keep others employed, and to carry through some object or other. She had conceived a sincere friendship for me, and prevailed the more easily on me to prolong my visit, as I lived in her house, where she suggested all manner of inducements for my stay, and raised all manner of obstacles to my journey. When, however, I wanted to turn the conversation to Lilli, she was not so well pleased or so

sympathising as I had hoped. On the contrary, she said, that, under the circumstances, nothing could be wiser than our resolution to part, and maintained that one must submit to what is unavoidable, banish the impossible from the mind, and look around for some new object of interest in life. Full of plans as she always was, she had not intended to leave this matter to accident, but had already formed a project for my future conduct: from which I clearly saw that her recent invitation to Heidelberg had not been so disinterested as it sounded.

She reminded me that the Electoral Prince, Charles Theodore, who had done so much for arts and sciences, was still residing at Mannheim, and that as the court was Roman Catholic, while the country was Protestant, the latter party was extremely anxious to strengthen itself by enlisting the services of able and hopeful men. I was now to go, in God's name, to Italy, and there mature my views of art: meanwhile they would work for me. It would, on my return, soon be seen whether the budding affection of Fräulein von W—— had expanded, or had been nipped, and whether it would be politic, through an alliance with a respectable family, to establish myself and my fortunes in a new home.

All these suggestions I did not, to be sure, reject; but my planless nature could not wholly harmonise with the scheming spirit of my friend: I was gratified, however, with the kind intentions of the moment; while Lilli's image floated before me, waking and dreaming, and mingled with everything else which afforded me pleasure or distraction. But now I summoned before my soul the serious import of my great project of travel; and I resolved to set myself free, gently and with propriety, and in a few days to make known to her my determination of taking leave of her, and to continue on my way.

One night Mlle. Delf had gone on until late un-

folding to me her plans, and all that certain parties were disposed to do for me; and I could not but feel grateful for such sentiments, although the scheme of strengthening a certain circle, through me and my possible influence at court, was manifest enough. It was about one o'clock when we separated. I soon fell into a sound sleep; but before very long I was awakened by the horn of a postilion, who was stopping and blowing it before the house. Very soon Mlle. Delf appeared with a light, and a letter in her hands, and, coming up to my bedside, she exclaimed, "Here's the letter! read and tell me what it says. Surely it comes from the Weimar people. If it is an invitation, do not follow it, but call to mind our conversation." I asked her to give me a light, and leave me for a quarter of an hour to myself. She went away very reluctantly. I remained thinking for some time without opening the letter. The express, then, has come from Frankfort, — I know both the seal and hand; the friend, then, has arrived there; he is still true to his invitation, and our own want of faith and incredulity had made us act prematurely. Why could one not wait, in a quiet, civilised place, for a man who had been announced distinctly, but whose arrival might be delayed by so many accidents? The scales fell from my eyes. All the kindness, the graciousness, the confidence, of the past came up livingly before me; and I was almost ashamed of the strange, wilful step I had taken. I opened the letter, and found all that had happened explained naturally enough. My missing guide had waited for the new landau, which was to come from Strasburg, day after day, hour after hour, as we had waited for him; then, for the sake of some business, he had gone round by way of Mannheim to Frankfort, and to his dismay had not found me there. He sent the hasty letter by express, proposing, that now the mistake was explained, I should instantly return,

and save him the shame of going to Weimar without me.

Much as my understanding and my feeling inclined me to this side, there was still no lack of weighty arguments in favour of my new route. My father had laid out for me a fine plan of travel, and given me a little library, which might prepare me for the scenes I was to visit, and also guide me on the spot. In my leisure hours I had had no other entertainment than to reflect on it; and, indeed, during my last short journey I had thought of nothing else in the coach. Those glorious objects with which, from my youth up, I had become acquainted, histories, and all sorts of tales, gathered before my soul; and nothing seemed to me so desirable as to visit them, while I was parting from Lilli for ever.

As these thoughts passed through my mind, I had dressed, and was walking up and down my chamber. My anxious hostess entered. "What am I to hope?" she cried. "Dearest madam," I answered, "say no more on the subject: I have made up my mind to return; the grounds of that conclusion I have well weighed, and to repeat them to you would be wasting time. A resolution must be taken sooner or later, and who should take it but the person whom it most concerns?"

I was moved, and so was she; and we had an excited scene, which I cut short by ordering my servant to engage a post-coach. In vain I begged my hostess to calm herself, and to turn the mock-departure which I took of the company the evening before into a real one; to consider that it was only a temporary visit, a postponement for a short time; that my Italian journey was not given up, and my return that way was not precluded. She would listen to nothing, and disquieted her friend, already deeply excited, still more. The coach was at the door; everything was packed,

and the postilion gave the usual signs of impatience; I tore myself away; she would not let me go, and, with so much art, brought up all the arguments of the present, that finally, impassioned and inspired, I shouted out the words of Egmont,—

“Child! child! no more! The coursers of time, lashed, as it were, by invisible spirits, hurry on the light car of our destiny; and all that we can do is in cool self-possession to hold the reins with a firm hand, and to guide the wheels, now to the left, now to the right, avoiding a stone here, or a precipice there. Whither it is hurrying, who can tell? and who, indeed, can remember whence he came?”

THE END